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THE FIGHTING CHANCE

By Gertrude Lynch

“NATURE,” said the statesman, as he strode about the rose garden with his hands under his coat-tails and quoted from his own famous speech, “nature, I repeat, gives every man a fighting chance.” A pause; then: “Men, of course, include women.”

“Embrace,” corrected Mrs. de la Mar, softly.

The statesman admitted the improvement with a bow. “Your sex will always veer to the personal.”

“Some of it is so impersonal, dear statesman.”

“Do not tempt me—it is useless; I am your husband’s guest, and I have not forgotten that you refused me for him, neither of which is the real reason.”

“Let bygones be bygones.”

“Precisely; that is the real reason.”

“It was excusable,” again murmured Mrs. de la Mar in the sweet syllables that were a monotone between a whisper and a voice. “You were speaking of fighting chances, and I assume that when a man broaches that topic he can only mean——”

“I thought you knew me better; it would be trite to speak of rules and exceptions, but I must remind you that in our acquaintance, extending over a quarter of a century, there have been diversions from the normal often enough to prevent you from expecting the commonplace.”

“Then you——” Mrs. de la Mar’s fingers were clattering the tea-cups on the table that the servant had just wheeled toward them—“you were thinking of——?”

“I was thinking of—whom do you suppose?”

“I have no idea; it is your rôle to be enigmatic.” Mrs. de la Mar looked honest surprise.

“But not my monopoly. Do you recall that you sent me once to meet a friend of yours at the station—in the old days—said that I would know her because she was so illogical?”

“You are trying to evade. I believe you really did mean——”

“Not at all. I am waiting for you to guess.”

“I cannot. Let me see. Fighting chances! You might be thinking of Kate Chayne, who is interested in a woman’s exchange—her sweetheart for her friend’s—or of Craig Willing, who is speculating in heiresses; or of Miles Eustace, who is bravely fighting the Boer war on the boulevards of London and Paris as well as on Fifth avenue; or of Lloyd Ailes, who is spending a fortune to be unanimously elected to something or other; or of Mrs. Steelside, who is debating between a yachting trip and a Pullman special as the spider’s web to connect the domestic and church altars for her brood of seven. The fighting chance! Who can tell who has it, or when, or why? Tell me! don’t tease me. I know when you stride up and down that way and become epigrammatic that you mean something—something unusual.”

“I have no desire to keep you in suspense; the discussion was your own. I was thinking of—Kenneth Bigelow.”

Mrs. de la Mar had been sitting so that her profile was in evidence; this being one of her strategic positions, she employed it only in moments that preceded a situation or accompanied it.

Even in the untempered light of the open, she did not look a day over twenty-eight, and although the memory of her relatives—the unfailing calendar of one's errors—never allowed her to forget that she had passed the fourth decade, she justified her own belief that age is merely a matter of conduct; and for once a creed and its practice were entirely harmonious. She forgot her studied pose in her confusion, and, turning sharply around, clasped her hands about her knees and looked the statesman full in the face.

"What is the use of my deceiving you, or rather, trying to? I never did but once, and that should have taught me a lesson."

"The lessons of youth are as easily forgotten as learned; we are to let bygones be bygones, are we not?"

"Yes, yes! But what do you know about Kenneth? What do you mean? Tell me, quick! You are as implacably accurate in your mind-reading as *Sherlock Holmes*."

If the statesman was gratified by her agitation, he did not look triumphant. He paused a moment, then continued the conversation.

"For years, whenever we have met, if it were only for a five-minute chat, you have never failed to mention your nephew, his schooling, his college days, his friends, his social successes, his affection for you, and yours for him—words, words, words; but it is only by gathering up a woman's words, one here, another there, a phrase to-day and its sister phrase to-morrow, that you at last learn the real woman—*ex pede Herculem*, you know. I have assumed by this method of reasoning that the star in your nephew's orbit governs your House of Desire—isn't that what the astrologers say?—and when the controlling interest of a woman's thought is focused about a man on the threshold of life, it is not too Napoleonic to assume that his future is a matter of concern." He stirred his tea slowly, and tested it.

Mrs. de la Mar did not interrupt. It did not need a physiognomist to determine that she was greatly agitated;

this would mean much to those who knew her poise.

The statesman added a third lump of sugar. "Your penchant for politics is well known; it nearly led you to that lie at the end of two impossibilities—the *obey* of the marriage service. If you had been a man you would have been a diplomat, and the rôle of life a woman misses on account of sex she tries to impress on some plastic material of the masculine order intrusted to her influence.

"You wrote me a letter asking me to come here for a quiet visit. As it happened, it found me at the right time, when I needed, and could take, an outing. You stated that there was to be no one but yourself and husband, possibly your nephew. The 'possibly' was underlined, and uncertainty underlined in a woman's letter means that there is a certainty in her mind. The thirst for information, which in your sex is termed curiosity, has been another impelling motive—if another were needed—why I should break away from my established rule and visit you. Next to learning an entirely unexpected fact, there is nothing more gratifying than to find that what we have assumed from slight premises is correct. Your nephew is to be here. You are desirous for us to meet where we shall be uninterrupted by the world, so that your grace and charm—duplicated in him, if all the stories I hear are correct—will fascinate me to the point of yielding to your will and his. You want me to place his steps; to start him right; to guard him against failure with my aegis. How many times have you told me that you loathe the commercial life, that you believe it hardens, contracts and repels; that you fear the artistic rôle, for you have seen how it demoralizes and weakens, since its rare prizes are won by yielding rather than by control? The physician, you say, is always material, studying the physical, and living it, and the legal mind stays in a rut. You have narrowed the choice of profession—the inference is plain, is it not? You do not contradict me?"

"What is the use?"

"Why were you not frank?"

"I never am. I can't be. The highest forms of life are the most complex, you know. I am classified far from the molecule and microbe, which have each a single aim and a single way of reaching it. It is natural for me to zigzag."

Mrs. de la Mar was assuming a boldness of demeanor she was far from feeling.

The butler approached, placed some letters on the table, flicked a few crumbs from its snowy cloth and withdrew stealthily. The statesman's eyes followed him, but his gaze was introspective, and Mrs. de la Mar was disturbed by it. Had she made a mistake? As he said, should she have been more frank in the beginning? Had she put him on his guard? She waited a moment, but the statesman was still, to all appearance, counting the distance across the lawn as measured by the servant's heels.

"A woman certainly deserves something from the man she has refused. Ingratitude, in such a case, would be too base."

The statesman smiled. "Tell me about him."

She tried to think quickly. What would be the most convincing point she could make? Never before had she realized how the years that had separated their lives had separated their knowledge of each other. Much might depend on her phrases of explanation or eulogy. What kind of a man was his ideal for a pupil, protégé or confrère? A man like himself, a weakling or a giant? A man to coerce or one to meet on equal terms? A man who would be a slave or a friend? She looked at the thin, compressed lips, at the cold, gray eyes, at the long, wavy hair sprinkled with snow, and then, shrinking yet a little from the moment of battle, she placed a conversational button on the foil.

"He has an adorable coloring; it comes and goes."

The statesman, with the desire to give her time, had occupied himself

during her short reverie by taking a seal-covered book from his waistcoat pocket and elongating the pencil on his chain.

He made a long mark on the open page, then said, drily: "That is certainly an item in his favor—a coloring that comes and goes."

"You are making fun of me."

"Not at all; quite the contrary. I repeat, it is a great point; if he had a coloring that simply stayed he might stay with it, and a man should always know when to leave. What else?"

Mrs. de la Mar, still uncertain, continued her fencing. She was in internal hysterics while her pose and expression were as tranquil as those of a worshiper at a wayside shrine.

"His hair is lovely, soft, blond and curly."

"It is seldom," answered the statesman, "that curls and brains come to the same man. Yes, I know," and he shook his leonine mane, "I have succeeded in spite of it."

"And so may he."

"It is not impossible; I could never agree that a man should have to work out the sins of his father——"

"It is his mother—to her waist."

He recalled her from the portrayal of domestic secrets. "Has he any other qualification for the station of life to which it pleases you to call him?"

He believed that he had guarded himself, by a perfect forecast of the situation, from any surprise; but his hostess, in becoming primitive, found him unprepared.

She rose suddenly from her wicker chair and stepped across the space that separated them. With the movement her scarlet crêpe gown tumbled in billowy folds; the sunlight, through an overhanging branch, fell full on her face, still as expressive and piquant as in youth. She seated herself on the garden bench at his side and took his two hands in hers. There were tears in her eyes; her voice, vibrant as a tuned string, her greatest charm, was trembling like that of one afflicted with stage-fright.

"I am sorry I was not frank; it is always the best way—with you, at least. I did ask you here for that; it is the greatest, the only wish of my soul. I must have it—I must! He is all I have, as dear to me as if he were my own. Everything in my life has disappointed—except him. My friendships, my marriage, my childlessness, my ambitions—everything ruined by youthful pride and its attendant mistakes! Out of all these ashes his future, his good, have risen like the phoenix of the fable. I wish to guard him as I was not guarded. I don't wish him to make a mistake through the blindness of those about him and his own inexperience. Now is the time that will mean all to him, that will start him on the path from which there is no return, that may give him that which is the greatest blessing—the work in which one puts one's heart and soul. Blessed, indeed, is the man or woman who has found that. I wish you to help me—it is the first step that counts so much; afterward comes the force of habit, of association, the deadening weight of acquired routine. Whatever is done for him must be done at once. His father and his mother, even my husband, insist on the commercial life for him, and there is only this alternative, for he has not the genius that would make the artistic possible after he has recognized his possession of mediocrity and its limitations."

She covered her face with her hands and spoke through separated fingers, the hot blood rushing to her temples. "He has a beautiful body and a beautiful soul. If he had lived in early Greece, he would have served Praxiteles for another Apollo. He has the pride that has kept him uncorrupted. He has been guarded too closely, perhaps, but it is a lesser evil than that which points the way and helps toward it, condoning excess under the blatant plea that a man of the world must find his road by going through the mud rather than around it. He has had leisure, and has used it wisely, for he inclines toward culture.

His heart is with me in this. He has studied and thought deeply. He is fallow ground for the sower. Will you be that sower? Will you make his career? Don't deny me, for the sake of auld lang syne."

The statesman was silent. He was watching some blades of grass swaying gently in the Summer breeze.

There was the thud of horses' hoofs on the highway separated from them by a towering hedge; the woman's tones emphasized their rhythm, and, as they died in the distance, the hypnotic power of receding repetitions calmed her excitement.

"You will forgive me for disturbing you in this shameless way? The tears of a worldly woman, shed for someone else, should convince a man, if nothing else does, that she is in earnest. I have only the claim on you I mention—of old friendship, one that has lasted through many years, that commenced when we were children—and we are now middle-aged. The foolishness of our Midsummer madness left in you, I am sure, not a particle of resentment. In your heart you are grateful for my denial, for I should not have helped your ongoing. Do for me what I would do for you without a moment's hesitation, if the positions were reversed."

He spoke at last. "That is so like a woman."

"What?"

"To assert that if she were a man she would do something that, if she were a man, she could not do, simply for that reason."

"You do not mean that you cannot——"

The statesman rose, and walked back and forth.

"I mean that if you had asked anything else of me in the world but this, my word would have prevented your emotion. I would do anything to make your life happier, anything that meant simply self-sacrifice; but this—this is beyond my power to promise."

"Beyond your power!" There were scorn and disbelief in the voice.

He noted and ignored, but his own

voice vibrated with feeling. "There is but one thing I have ever held, could ever hold, higher than the demands of self—the honor of my office. Never have I, never shall I, allow prejudice, hatred or affection to intrude into my mind and warp judgment. I have disappointed many by refusals, but I have disappointed myself oftener. The nation is a monster, and we, its keepers, feed to it continually our rations of love, friendship, pity, faith and charity, but it only cries for more. No judge on the bench is called on to exercise more impartial decisions than we—the government's police, as someone has called us. The enemies I have made would prove, if proof be needed, that what I say to you is the truth. I have but a single watchword on my banner, 'The Impersonal.'"

"Then it is hopeless? I have dreamed, prayed, humiliated myself for nothing?"

"By no means. My presence here, under the circumstances, should at least show to your discernment that what I claim, I am—without prejudice in this matter, as in everything that pertains to my life work. There is opportunity, great opportunity, for the right man. We want young blood, we want freshness, enthusiasm wisely directed and not too impatient of control. If all you say of your nephew, if all I hear, if half of it, be true, he is better equipped than most. I can at least promise him——"

"What? Don't keep me in suspense."

"A fighting chance, my dear friend. It lies neither with you nor with me, but with himself."

They were facing the west, where the afternoon sun was gradually withdrawing to its repose, leaving behind trailing messages of promise and regret. The light breeze played about them, and the statesman, who had resumed his place, leaned forward and wrapped about his companion's neck the long ends of a floating scarf. There was finality in his tone, as he changed the subject.

"You said that you expected your

nephew to-day? Did I not so understand you at breakfast?" He turned, meeting no response, wondering if she had not heard, or if she were endeavoring to find a last word that might prove convincing.

Like the sunset sky, her face was transfigured by varying emotions. She was transformed from a worldly and normal creature into something of beauty, enthusiasm and hope. Her breath came in gasps and her eyes shone like stars. Her voice, which in her commonplace moods thrilled like the plaint of a harp, uttered the monosyllables, "He has come! my boy! my boy!" She had not exaggerated the power of her affection. One could read in her ejaculation the love that passes measure; the kind that is rarely met, perhaps never, except when it is combined with the maternal.

They moved slightly so as to front the porch and lawn. The tenseness of her mood communicated itself to the statesman. Not a gesture or expression of the youth who approached them was lost to his quickened sensibility. In after years, by closing his eyes the whole scene would return, as only those mental pictures come that by force of some exceptional circumstance are indelibly printed on the sensitized film of memory.

Down the steps of the veranda, across the velvet sward, Kenneth Bigelow approached. He was tall, supple, graceful, his broad shoulders and well-knit muscles counteracting an impression of delicacy, shown by the quick blood that answered his mood as the word the thought, and under his eyes by the network of veins that in moments of excitement were blue as the eyes themselves. The statesman thought at that moment—an opinion from which he never swerved—that this was the most perfect type of physical manhood he had ever seen. It was as if intervening generations had been swept aside, and the Greek type, relieved from a too perfect classicism by some powerful strain, had been revived in this twentieth-century product.

The time was a crucial one; Kenneth

knew it, yet the hand that met the statesman's, after his embrace of his aunt, was as cool as the statesman's own, firm in pressure and sensitive to the touch. He answered commonplaces with commonplaces, and, after waiting courteously for his elders to resear themselves, threw himself on the bench between them, his every gesture revealing an inner grace of which the act was but a symbol. His clothes seemed a part of himself; they and his manner were so perfect that no one ever thought of them. He had a power of reserve that impressed immediately, yet his wit was keen and he allowed himself few slipshod methods of expression. Mrs. de la Mar, in stating that pride had kept his soul uncorrupted, showed an analysis unusual with her. The moral standpoint was neither inherited nor acquired; it was rather a spontaneous expression, the ethics of a god who is repelled by the immoral as something imperfect and futile.

"What do you think the most necessary qualification for a diplomat?" asked the statesman.

"Perfect truthfulness," answered Kenneth, unhesitatingly; and added, smilingly, "He would be twice panoplied, for he would never be believed."

It was after this, said half in jest, that they separated, the statesman excusing himself from accompanying them to the house on the plea of his need of a solitary cigar.

He watched the two go arm in arm across the stretch of lawn, his eyes resting with a peculiar expression on Kenneth Bigelow. Beauty, youth, grace, the power to attract women and to hold men; greatest of all, apparently, strength to resist the insidious poison of flattery! A fighting chance? He had all the weapons in Nature's armory. Who could disarm such an equipment? Then he shook his head with the gesture of the sadly wise. "It is a perfection that appalls."

When the corner of the house hid them from view, he reseated himself on the garden bench, felt in the pocket of

his coat and took out a long black case filled with papers. From this he drew a letter, a personal letter from a man who outranked him; of whom there were not many. He re-read it carefully, then folded and replaced it, and returned the case to his pocket. He sat for a long time, perfectly motionless; finally he said aloud, softly, as was his habit when alone:

"Strange that it should come at this time! If I accept the post, I must have somebody, somebody with brains and *savoir-faire*, a close tongue and unswerving loyalty. The fighting chance—it doesn't usually come with so little effort. I wonder if he is to be the exception to the rule?"

II

THE ingénue is popularly supposed to be like the earth in its initial stages while chaos reigned. The ingénue in question could not be so classified; she had perfect lines and curves, and no one had ever accused her of inanity; to be without form and void might apply to others of her kind, not to her; she was a notable exception. She stood in the middle of the floor giving directions in clear and concise terms to a maid, who obeyed her with a celerity that suggested fear rather than moral standpoints in regard to duty.

"In that tray? No, in the upper drawer. I think if you sit on it, it may close. Yes, mamma, in a minute; please don't interrupt. Where am I going? Do you know this is the twentieth time you have asked that question? What does it matter where I go? The going is the principal thing at present. How long? How can I tell? It will depend on whether she will have me or not. No, Jane; haven't I told you a dozen times, the blue—blue—blue? What a fool you are, Jane! She? Why, Mrs. de la Mar; whom should I mean? Oh, mamma, you and Jane together are enough to drive one to matrimony.

"She expressly said that she didn't want me this week! I understand

that perfectly. No, Jane; Balzac, B-a-l-z-a-c—you know I never go away without my Balzac. Yes, the rice powder. You'll be asking me next if I am going to take stockings. Oh, you need not bother to get out her letter again, I have read it a dozen times already. Oh, well, just as you please, though I tell you I know it by heart. 'My dear Grace—So sorry that I must ask you to delay for a few days the visit of your charming daughter—I assume, of course, she is charming, although I have never seen her.' Wouldn't that make a healthy young woman ill? Why do women get gross in their flatteries as they do in their appearance after forty, I wonder? 'I expect my old friend, the Honorable Claridge Robertson for a few days, and my nephew is to meet him here. Unfortunately for me, both visits are to be fleeting, so at the end of next week I shall expect to see Blanche—so sorry that I must wait, but you understand. I shall have some young people here to meet her, and get up some hops and picnics with the town people to help. Let me know the train so that I may send the carriage for her. She may bring her own maid, if she likes; if not, I can supply her one who is thoroughly competent.'

"Yes, I know the kind of maid a woman lends you—tears your hair out by the roots and polishes your nails until they look like starched collars.

"So I am to be cheated out of meeting the Honorable Claridge Robertson, am I? A few young fools to meet me—and town people. How I hate the town people a woman with a country house brings about you! Of all the impossible, frumpy fillers-in—look at you as a mouse looks at a cat, and absorb your ideas as a beggar absorbs a Christmas feed—yes, mamma, I said '*feed*,' didn't you hear me?

"Old enough to be my father, is he? Now, if that isn't just like you, mamma! If I get at all interested in a man, you are sure to say that he's old enough to be my father. I should think you would know by this time that a man isn't good for anything until he is old enough to be my

father. Of course, I haven't ever seen him—but that is immaterial. Haven't I sat in the corner of drawing-rooms for years, hearing women tell how they've tried to catch him, while I looked demurely at photographs—oh, those ghastly photographs, which are supposed to be mental food sufficient for the *débutante*!—the last were cathedral towns of Europe. A hostess who could think of that novel form of entertainment is really wasted in a small place like this. I've always made up my mind that if I ever got the opportunity I'd show those women where they made their mistakes. Funny what fools women will make of themselves over a man who is in the public eye, no matter what he looks like or what he really is. Oh, of course, mamma, I sha'n't let anybody hear me talk this way—why do you always say that? I must be myself somewhere; I have to be young and innocent and green outside; it's a pity if I can't let the bars down when I'm with you and Jane!

"What was it that the soldier at the citadel in Halifax told us—that he wanted to go to South Africa so as to have a fighting chance for his medal? Well, this is my fighting chance to get away from my rôle of *débutante*, and I'm going to take it. If it were not for one thing—only one—I should order my wedding cards before I start.

"Yes, Jane, of course you are going with me. If the Honorable Robertson has a valet—well, you ought to know by this time how useful a valet can be. Mrs. Claridge Robertson! Yes, mamma, Mrs. Claridge Robertson! How does that sound? I can see myself trailing into a room behind that name, and hearing everyone whisper, 'Isn't she young? What a child to be the wife of Claridge Robertson!'"

The ingénue sat on the floor and fanned herself, while her mother looked at her helplessly. For two years now this had been Mrs. Adrian's attitude. When her daughter was four-

teen she had been sent abroad to acquire languages, finish and the possible advantages of travel, with a maiden aunt whose sole duty had apparently been to avoid any responsibilities that might devolve upon her brevet rank. What passed in those four years Mrs. Adrian never knew. The result she saw only too well. Someone said of Blanche Adrian, in an after time, that she had the face of an angel and the soul of a *demi-mondaine*, and that description will do as well as any other. Not every man to-day believes that big blue eyes, a lineless face and conversations whose *double entendres* are to all seeming unconscious blunders denote one unspotted by the world; but there are still many conservative enough to cherish the creed of their forefathers. This belief has changed many a cynic into a fool—a statement that Blanche Adrian had proved more times than would be credited. Her memory, assisted by the leaves of a small red-covered book, kept record of the exact number. The years since her return from the Continent held a series of *affaires de cœur*, from the entanglements of which she had wormed herself at the edge of disaster by the wiles of a worldling concealed beneath the mask of a child. Mrs. Adrian's life, meanwhile, had been one of chattering teeth, nightmares and agues of fear. Every morning she awoke with the sense of impending danger; every night she retired welcoming her only refuge from presentiments of disaster that never materialized into fact, but of which she suffered all the horrors in anticipation.

Whatever Blanche's faults might be—and they passed the power of the ordinary chronicler—she never bored by repetition. She passed from adventure to adventure with the reckless abandon of a child, and withdrew from consequences with the skill of a Machiavelli. Nature in her gave the lie to the statement that the soul and body are twin-like, the beauty of the one a type of its counterpart; her

soul had matured early with the fatal celerity of one to pleasure born; her body remained poised at that indefinite boundary which the poet has described as the place where brook and river meet. The complexities of this double personality gave her opportunities for more than the ordinary wiles of femininity. She was a born *intrigante*; in a different stratum she would have spied for a secret society, hobnobbed with counterfeiterers, and turned state's evidence to escape the unpleasantness of striped clothes and barred windows. Finalities wearied her. It was only in the eternal struggle, the excitement of the game, the disentanglement of crossed threads that her fevered life responded to the power of stimulants. She would have stood forever at the fork of a trail, lost in the pleasurable anticipation of its uncertainties, enjoying to the utmost the sensuous enjoyment of the hunter's life; but as soon as she was forced to a choice of paths, fatigue would overtake her, and the glory of the day would be lost in the cloud of the already known.

In her world—a small one, it is true—she made a distinct figure. To do this in an arena where competition is the oxygen of the air, talent the hydrogen, and mediocrity alone a negligible quantity is no mean achievement. One's individuality must be emphasized, and the adoption of a rôle must have no visible flaw. She was rarely forgotten. Against an accumulation of similar types her own stood out with the relief of a statue against a background of canvases. Women regarded her as safe, and made friends; men turned to her, wearied by studied poses, cynical epigrams and the atmosphere of intrigue, and sought refreshment from one whose concealment of art gave that art its certificate of perfection. While she attracted by her simplicity, she held by a certain mystery, an allurements of promise. To each man she was the untaught, waiting his guiding hand. She made no public display of these guiding

hands, as a weaker or vainer woman might have done. Ostracism, immediate and final, was the punishment for the man who dared impugn the veracity of her public attitude by too great a fervor in his attentions. In private she promised much and often. But at home she ruled her widowed mother with the unflinching power of the strong over the weak, and to avoid the payment of those promissory notes of affection, scattered here and there, she declared her mother to be a miracle of ferocity in league with a brutal guardian; and by this means she released herself from obligations when they became too pressing.

To her, marriage held the horror that it often inspires in the woman whose freedom has passed beyond the bounds of conventionality. Only the reward of a cyclone of feeling or the compensation of social prestige could ever make its irksomeness possible. It was a problem with her which was more desirable, the ability to stand where her position would be so secure that she could afford to throw off the mask and be herself, or to lose herself in a torrent of sentiment, where everything would be overthrown except the supreme delight of loving and of being loved—an experience which her self-absorption had only allowed her in the subdued passions of reverie.

While marriage meant to her a necessity, or at least a means to an end, to Mrs. Adrian such a disposal of her daughter would come as the joy that the slave shackled to another feels when the chains of his companion are broken, and in the withdrawal of his enforced mate he finds his own release. She asked for no heaven as the meed of her efforts; the day that she witnessed her daughter's legal obligation would compensate her even for the loss of an eternal inheritance. Neither social position, wealth, an incorruptible past nor a promising future was a necessary attribute for a son-in-law from her viewpoint. Any one masculine who would

assume the responsibility of Blanche's future would be welcomed if her natural feelings were allowed sway—it is needless to remark that they never were. Longing to cry out in gratitude to successive men who offered themselves for her approval, as one drowning welcomes a deliverer, careless of genealogical correctness, she was obliged to refuse on one excuse and another, and to meet requests, rebukes and threats with unmoved negations while her heart was pleading their cause more eloquently than they could plead it themselves.

The dissonance of her daily relations caused the delay of harmony for which she longed with the tired soul of the middle-aged. That she saw no end to her perplexities did not produce hopelessness. She had rare recuperative power, and in every new man believed she saw a possible savior. At the mention of Claridge Robertson her heart bounded as the pulse of the maiden throbs at the mention of a secret adorer. She tried to rob her tone of some of its excess of hope.

"If you really mean that you want to marry Claridge Robertson, I will help you in any way I can. I should not object to him as a son-in-law."

The ingénue chuckled in a peculiarly exasperating way. "Now, mamma, that is truly maternal. You would not object to the Honorable as a son-in-law—a man that every woman in society has tried to snare some time or other. You would not object! Your submission under such an impending calamity does you infinite credit. There is really nothing a mother would not do for her child—the pelican in the wilderness is your fitting symbol."

She continued her directions to the maid. "Yes, Jane, I intend to travel in that white muslin gown—the dotted one with the valenciennes; yes, the white straw hat with the big white rose at the side; white gloves, of course, and, yes, the white canvas shoes—did you pipeclay them as I told you? Now, mamma, I know that people don't usually take long railroad journeys in

white muslin gowns, but that is no reason why I should not, is it? It will be all soiled? I don't think so. I intend to take a raglan, an old hat, gloves and shoes in a box, and change on the way there. Where will I change? Oh, mamma, your curiosity in regard to details is overpowering. I shall write you all about it. Now, here is a slip of paper, and before I forget it I want you to diagram exactly the location of the rose garden. The train gets in at half after four; you say it will take about an hour to drive to the house. If I should leave the carriage somewhere, is there a path by which I could get into the rose garden? I should judge that Mrs. de la Mar and her two guests would sit there at that time of day, and I could make a most effective entrance with my muslin gown, white gloves, shoes and hat. Will I have the sun at my back? That is good. I might have to squint otherwise, which would spoil the timid expression with which I shall greet Mrs. de la Mar's surprise, and explain that the letter delaying my visit did not arrive. I shall be simply overwhelmed with remorse and confusion. I shall offer to return home; even the submission you displayed a little while ago, at the idea of the Honorable Claridge Robertson becoming a member of our exclusive home circle, will be as a shadow to its substance in comparison with the quality I intend to exhibit on that occasion.

"What other guest? Why, don't you remember she spoke in her letter of her nephew? Is it possible that I have failed to impress on you that it is the nephew who alone stands between me and the pride of being Mrs. Robertson? No? I have been remiss. You must have heard of him. Why, they say women simply leap over one another to get near him—that Paderewski is a leper in comparison; that he is the handsomest man on this side of the continent. It is the nephew I am afraid of as a bar to satisfied ambition. I am morally certain that I shall fall in love with him; in fact, I intend to. I have never been in love, and when one

makes a fool of one's self one should do it in good company.

"Yes, I can see by your face, mamma, that the stock of the Honorable Claridge Robertson is falling. Don't despair! It is merely a struggle between ambition and love. I may return as the prospective bride of the greatest statesman of the age or as that of the handsomest man—a poor thing, but my own. You may rest assured of one thing, however, and may the knowledge bring peace to your restless heart! I shall certainly accept one or the other. It has got to come some time, and I shall never have a better chance to choose between the two great forces of life. As sure as one can be of anything in this world, I am positive that your patience is to have its reward. Whoever it may be, his loss will be your gain. Nature is a great adjuster, isn't she?"

The maid was arranging the going-away gown on the bed, picking out the ruffles, pulling the lacy frills and smoothing a tiny wrinkle here and there. The ingénue turned and watched her for a moment; then, in unchanged tones, said, slowly: "Those little white dresses that I always wear remind me of my soul—they are so different. Yesterday this gown was spotted and stained and worn; now see, it is fresh as a flower in the morning; but my poor soul, that used to be like this, it is old and worn and stained, and there is no way of renovating it, no way of bringing it back to its freshness and its beauty and its youth."

A great revulsion of feeling swept over Mrs. Adrian, but she did not dare show it by any outer sign. In this scene was the epitome of their relations, the tension of the artificial, the fear and revolts, the contentions and disappointments. As in a magic-lantern show the unexpected picture sometimes obtrudes, so, occasionally, she would see for a moment in her child all the revolt against an inheritance of corruption, the wish without the power to bring its health to maturity, the weariness of one who has had no childhood and no illusions, the pre-

sentiments of years of satiety already begun. She was suffering from the disease of her time—precocity and its deadening reactions, and helpless as one at a death-bed. Her mother watched these recurrent struggles, suffered with her, for her and by her, continually, losing her own mental and physical well-being, as blossoms fade in the neighborhood of a cankered lily.

It was a beautiful afternoon in the garden. The roses bloomed there as if Summer were eternal and Winter but the dream of a decadent soul. Through the heated air were delicious currents of freshness, as, swimming in tepid water, the limbs are touched now and then by an invigorating wave. In the hedge an amorous bird practiced a nocturne, and a locust with orchestral ambitions was tuning the strings of his violin.

Mrs. de la Mar, the statesman and the nephew chatted languidly. The morning had been spent on the links, and now, toward twilight, they had met and resumed their talk of the day before. It was apparent that the statesman was weighing his companion's possibilities, that he was willing to be prevailed on, and opposed only the natural barriers; but that the young man must prove himself convincing was evident. It was not enough to be well informed, to be ready, to have his principles and information based solidly; there were many others who could boast this equipment—a long waiting list at the statesman's beck and call, well armed with credentials, with their hands on the levers of power. It was the quality of convincingness that must be displayed. And now, when the two men had been brought together, some second must be seized, freighted with opportunity, and its burden utilized; some test might perhaps arise that would change the lukewarmness of the statesman's attitude into the decision of a final choice. Thus far such opportunity had not come, and no test had offered its aid. That the young man had lost nothing was silently conceded; that he had yet

to gain was no less apparent. Mrs. de la Mar was tactful with her entrances and exits; she did not allow them to become wearied by each other, neither did she obtrude when the presence of a third might be distracting.

"Generally speaking," said the statesman, "I believe the celibate to be the ideal statesman; certainly celibacy is almost a necessity in the case of a young man—marriage at forty, I should say, not before. This freedom not only gives him time to ground his foundations properly, but it also gives him an opportunity to utilize to the utmost the feminine influence that to-day, more than at any other time of our world's history, owing to the greater attraction between the sexes as the result of our strained nerves, is such a factor in matters political. A married man cannot use the weapon effectively. He has his home ties, and he cannot afford to jeopardize his position by entanglements which, perhaps innocent in themselves, have the appearance of intrigue. A free man can make use of every social opportunity to his desired end, and social opportunities are the greatest of all in the game of statecraft."

There was a slight rustle of foliage, and in the pathway that wound circuitously from the high road, through arcades of splendor where roses, white, crimson and gold, rioted in mad confusion, a vision of beauty appeared. The vision resolved itself into a slim young person, in spotless white, with a big picture hat, the left side upheld by a flower. In one hand she held a red rose she had picked on the way, in the other her fluffy skirts. The flush on her cheeks, the golden hair that caught the sunlight, were no less entrancing than the look half of astonishment, half of dismay, which was apparent to the trio, as she crossed the intervening space.

"Who can she be?" murmured Mrs. de la Mar. "I certainly have never seen her before."

The three rose as she reached them and stopped falteringly. She looked

beseechingly at Mrs. de la Mar, as a child might who has a favor in mind and is trying to voice its importance.

"You don't know me? I thought perhaps you would think I looked like mamma; so many do. I am Blanche Adrian. You know I was to come to-day. I suppose you forgot, you have so many others, and——"

Mrs. de la Mar was trying to think of something to say that would meet this unexpected situation.

"I sent Jane, my maid, around by the regular road, but the man who drove us said I might find my way through the woods, and it was so beautiful! Your roses must be like those of the Garden of Eden, I think. I picked one; do you mind?"

Mrs. de la Mar had recovered from her surprise.

"My dear child, I am so glad to see you. I did not get any letter from you about the trains, and I presume mine did not reach you?"

"Letters? I think," explained the ingénue, "that we have the most unsatisfactory postal system in the world. You see, we are very primitive, and the postmistress has to read all the mail before it is distributed. Sometimes the children get sick—she has seven—and then we don't get our letters for a week or two."

"You are just as welcome," said Mrs. de la Mar; "I should have liked to have sent the carriage. Would you care to go to your room, my dear?"

"I am tired, but not that kind of tired. If I can sit here for a few minutes and watch the sunset and the flowers, and hear you talk——"

Introductions were performed.

The statesman and Kenneth Bigelow made simultaneous movements of offering chairs, while Mrs. de la Mar resumed her own, wondering at the spotlessness of the ingénue's manner and clothes.

The ingénue looked first at the statesman, then at the nephew; in each countenance she read invitation and hope. There were some scarlet cushions between the two. She paused a moment, then sank gracefully on

them, smiling a refusal at each man in turn.

The two men resumed their places, the statesman at her right and Kenneth Bigelow at her left.

III

"A LADY to see you, sir."

'Show her in.'

The secretary turned wearily. The desk was piled with a mass of documents and letters, and his mind, grooved in its daily rut, could not all at once disentangle itself from its environment. He was a fair type of the man whom the transposing process of governmental life makes into a machine. He was slight, anemic, not too careful of his clothes, and in every motion of his body, in the cold humanlessness of his gray eye, in the stiffness of his attitudes, he suggested the class that departments produce from the raw material intrusted to them.

The last possession of these human symbols is ambition; when that departs they are indeed perfect in the eyes of their *alma mater*. He had not yet reached the final stage, for, in his case, exceptional circumstances had helped to avert the crisis. From small beginnings he had risen, and where to most of his kind the solid wall of men like themselves, seeking by the mere force of numbers and commonplaceness to check progress, was a sufficient barrier, lucky accidents of death, departure or favor had helped him into and through wedge-like entrances, only momentarily opened, and then barred forever to the clamoring throngs.

He was now the secretary of the Honorable Claridge Robertson; he was more, he was his memory man, one who never forgot or mislaid information that could assist the popularity of his chief. One of the reasons for the phenomenal success of the Honorable Claridge Robertson was his aptness in recognition, his unusual power of recalling incidents of meeting, concerning which it was truly remarkable, amid the thousands of simi-

lar occurrences, that they should have made an impression. It was truly remarkable should have made an impression. There is no greater power wielded by the statesman than that of recalling the name, face or achievement of the casual stranger; its power lies in the basic vanity of humanity, or in the restless ambition to stand out from the crowd, to impress one's individuality on the shifting sands of passing lives.

No one recognized in the pale-faced, quiet-mannered man who was always in attendance upon Claridge Robertson one of the important elements in the statesman's popularity. Did he recognize it himself? Who could tell? Certainly by neither word nor deed of acknowledgment had he ever admitted the help of his subordinate. The prerogative of the official is to use the brains of his employees to further his own ends; they are accepted as legitimate aids, as the tables, chairs or desks are employed for personal comfort or need. Thousands of lives may be sacrificed on the altar of those a step beyond in rank, but they are unnoted in departmental annals, blue books or yearly reports. The one thing that these lives lack, the strength to break away from their slavery, is sufficient cause, if cause were ever demanded, why abilities should not be taken into account. Slavery has never had its individual census, and the slavery of the brain is no less forgetful than that of the body.

The secretary to the Honorable Claridge Robertson, John Townsend, recognized his own limitations, in which he differed from many of his kind; he further recognized that if he did not wish to lose the delicate plant of hope that leads to political preferment he must continue to make himself invaluable to his chief, and accept uncomplainingly the apparent blindness of his superior to his merits and help. No other way than this suggested itself to his mind, trained in the subtleties of his profession. He could not risk antagonism by demands; he could not afford to see that which it was

not intended he should see; he could not hint of his own work to those who might prove disloyal and sow the seeds of distrust in the mind of the chief that could destroy him with a word or look. The man who has been associated too closely with a celebrity risks always the chance of loss when the inopportune moment of his chief's fall from favor comes, as come it will. The successor in office does not care to accept the favorite of another, neither does the man who goes back to his rural constituents and settles down to the life of the first man of the village remember that behind him he leaves one whose life he has absorbed as a sponge absorbs water; and, when the sponge is wrung dry, it is thrown back into the stagnant pool of governmental service.

In John Townsend's life lesser ambitions had been narcotized, but there was still one insistent. He believed that the day would come when his chief would recognize his years of service, his untainted loyalty, and place him where he would be compensated for his fidelity. The one thing that makes subordination possible to many is the creed that it leads to the autocrat's chair, where every insult, every neglect, every request ignored will be visited in turn on other unfortunates.

He advanced with the outstretched hand and stereotyped smile of the embryonic diplomat.

"It is you; I am glad to see you." The fervor of his statement was not overpowering, but there are some whose enthusiasm is so great that it surrounds everyone with a halo of reflection.

Edith Deming was such a one. She was a creature so vital that she tired as often as she pleased. She had never exercised restraint, and the meaning of self-control was as unknown to her as if it were a versified enigma in Sanskrit. She was a creature of emotions, and the wonder was that their source was unquenchable. She lacked the most delicate sense of all—the sense of non-color.

About John Townsend raged the emotions of her life at present. It

was natural that it should be so. The merciless law of averages would bring them together, whenever their orbits touched. Her positive and his negative force were needed for the entity, the attempt of the natural law. At his coldness her own superabundant warmth was tempered. Her heedlessness of consequences, her entire lack of power to read the sure laws of cause and effect, were ever attracted by the quiet reserve that weighed every word before it was spoken, dominated unruly thought and recognized graver needs than the pleasure of the moment. With her he was as nearly human as he could be; there were moments of unbending, seconds when she was able by the overpowering force of animal magnetism to delay the ossification of his machine-like life; intervals when she recognized that her influence had only political preferment as an opposing weight in the scales.

"I have news for you."

"Yes?" To the ordinary hearer the tone would not have seemed interested, but Edith Deming, who knew it well, detected an unusual tension.

"It is as I suspected. I found out to-day—wifely confidence, you know—that Claridge Robertson is to have the post; nothing is known of it yet, however."

"You are sure—absolutely sure?" The tone was now triumphant.

"Without a doubt."

"When is it to be consummated? When will it be made public? I should be with him, I suppose."

Edith Deming knit her brows. "That is the peculiar part of the whole thing. He knows it—has known it for a week."

"You are joking!"

"No; there was a private letter written to him in regard to it—the usual thing. The matter will not be made public yet, not until he has conferred with the others. Strange that he did not take you into his confidence!"

"It is most unusual; I don't understand it at all. A week or ten days, you say, and if he accepts——"

"He will go soon, and for a long time. It is a great opportunity for someone, for he will be unable to keep his attachés in the background as he has heretofore; it would not be to his interest to do so. They say it is one of the greatest diplomatic affairs on the tapis, and whoever is connected with it will necessarily acquire prestige. It is your opportunity. You must get it!"

"But how?" Already the weakness of the man whose acts are determined by another was apparent. "This is the first time for years that he has kept anything of importance from me. If he has been blind to my help he has at least trusted me. There must be something back of it all. It may be the beginning of the end. One can never tell with a man like Robertson; he is autocratic, and believes in himself so thoroughly that the mere idea that another had made himself too useful would be fatal to that other's interest. Napoleon would never allow any one of his aides to become too important to him, you know; well, Robertson is like Napoleon in that as in many other particulars. I wish I knew. I don't understand it."

"I do."

"You do? What do you mean? Then there is a reason? I am to go. Why have you kept it from me?"

"I know nothing definite. I only suspect. You know where he is."

John Townsend had not changed his attitude; where another man in the storm and stress would be walking back and forth like a caged animal, he was quiescent; only in the restless tapping of his finger-tips on the table did he show his perturbation. "Yes, he is at Mrs. de la Mar's country place. It is the first vacation he has taken for years."

"I saw her cousin Clare to-day; we lunched together. She has just come from there."

"And she told you——?"

"What I imagine is the cause of Mr. Robertson's silence. You know that he and Mrs. de la Mar were old sweethearts; everybody has forgotten

it, of course, but Clare says that Claridge has always been friendly—the little affair did not alienate him. She has a nephew——”

“I remember hearing of him—Kenneth Bigelow. A garden-party sort of chap, isn’t he?”

“That is the general impression; principally because he is so handsome, I judge. Those who know him, a select few, say he is a good sort; he has lived a sheltered life, in a way, but has preserved his manliness in spite of it. He is to be at Ilkley Villa while Mr. Robertson is there, and by putting two and two together I should imagine that there was something in the wind in regard to the coming appointment. It is a ghastly outrage, if it is so, after all your years of service, your continual and unselfish devotion; it is worse than ungrateful, —it is brutal.” Edith Deming was never too choice in her words; the superlative had always for her a strong attraction.

“What can I do?” The weakling again spoke.

“Do? I don’t know; something, I should say, and at once. Can’t you go down there, or shall I? You must not let things take their course. Someone should be on the ground, that is certain. Perhaps it would be better for me to go and worm my way into things, see how the land lies and let you know. If there is anything possible to be done to avert it, you may be sure I shall not be witless. I have a standing invitation, so my appearance will cause no comment.”

“You will not,” he spoke after a long silence, “do anything to jeopardize the claim I already have——?”

“Oh, I know of what you are thinking. I shall never be a thorough-going diplomat, but you can trust me in this; there is too much at stake! You must find an excuse to follow me. All that I shall be able to do is to find out if my presentiment is correct. You shall get this—you shall; there are great possibilities in it.”

She turned suddenly and placed both hands on his shoulders. They

were standing at the moment of departure, after a few trifles of arrangement and further wonder in regard to the situation had been expressed.

“If it comes—if you succeed—will you take me? Oh, the years I have waited, the years I have suffered! But there must come an end some time; this can’t go on forever! He is impossible, austere, cold, more indifferent and more exacting than ever. He will be only too glad, after the gossip dies out. He will grant me a divorce, I know; he is too proud to refuse, but I must do something decisive to gain it. Pleadings, arguments, I have tried all those, but it is a trouble, and he thinks only of his comfort and what the world might say. The step once taken, he will give it to me. I can, I will force him, if you will help me.”

He withdrew her hands from his shoulders and gazed back of him, cautiously. “Careful, the messenger may come at any moment.”

“Oh, why are you so careful and cold? Give up to your emotions once; be human—a man!”

A moment’s softness illumined his face; for an infinitesimal portion of time it was transfigured. An inner light seemed to glow through the stiff mask of constraint. “I could not be cold and indifferent to you. I am conscious of all you have done for me; if it were not for you I should not be here; you have served my interests well. I am not ungrateful.”

“Gratitude! I am not asking for gratitude—stones, when I want bread.”

“I know—you have everything—you should feel that.”

“But why do you not show it? Why do you shut it into your heart and keep me outside the barred door?”

“I am afraid—my position—the world.”

She wrung her hands until the kid split. “Haven’t you ever known what it was not to care for position, or the world, or the to-morrow? Haven’t you any appreciation of the delight of absolute self-renunciation?”

He caught her wrists in his thin fingers, which closed about them till they ached. His pale face, whitened by the sedentary life and by the denial of human interests, glowed as through an intervening substance an incandescent bulb gives a mysterious light.

"Do you know what it is to be racked unceasingly by emotions for which one dares not find a vent? Do you know the torture of the conflict between inclination and habit? You who throw off responsibility, duty, the social laws, all, everything—who speak of freeing yourself from the burden of marriage as another woman discusses changing her gown, can you grasp the idea of the agony the soul endures which has to fight inheritance, the ethics of early training and the iron bond of daily habit? I am like one of those creatures that nature has encased in a convoluted shell, always desiring the life of other beings, always striving to get somewhere, and yet weighted down by an intolerable burden. Outside is the sky, the open, the life of the free; within, the withered body, bereft of its privileges." He covered his face with his hands; when he withdrew them he had resumed his mask. "Come, you will need to make preparations, and I am detaining you."

He opened the door, and she did not dare, lawless as she was, to contradict his expressed wish to be alone. She was too feminine, however, to deny herself the privilege of the last word. "You are wronging yourself and me to act in this way. I hate your forced virtues, those that have been thrust upon you by your ancestors and by your mistakes. I hate those you force on me, patience, waiting, resignation. I want to be myself and I want——"

He took her hand gently. "My dear child, don't! You only unnerve yourself and me. I have a great deal of work to do and I must have serenity of thought; no one can think whose mind is upset by the war of feelings. Oh, you women, whose days

are but a search for new sensations, little do you realize what havoc you create in the lives that must be absolutely emotionless to do their allotted tasks." He was smiling his cold, slight smile, and she knew that the interview was over.

She closed the door and leaned against the iron railings as she waited for the elevator. The look of expectation, thwarted continually by the impassivity of an unresponsive being, had changed to one of exultation. Beneath her breath she murmured, in ecstatic syllables, "He is mine; he is mine at last!" Even on the street her triumphant look did not change, and passers-by wondered at it. For the first time she saw the beginning of the end, the possibility of freedom from the bond she hated, as only a woman of her type can hate the chain that fastens her to one whom she loathes with her whole heart and soul.

She made her preparations that evening, after a stormy interview with her husband, and amid a warring of feelings—hope, fear, triumph, despair. Often the old doubt racked her. "Always at the moment of yielding he remembers; I am nothing to him, less than nothing. He could forget me soon, or remember me as a hazy might-have-been, as a monk in his cloister recalls the faces of other days. Oh, I don't know, I don't know, but I must take the chance—my only chance."

Then she fell asleep with his name on her lips.

A journey meant little to Edith Deming; always impatient, she was never more so than when she started to travel. She neither looked for nor desired distraction. She chafed at the necessary evils, and the stoppings of the local train wrought havoc to her peace of mind. By the time she had reached the end of any journey she was more fit for a sanitarium than the quiet of a respectable home, where she was expected to play the rôle of guest. This day was no exception to the rule. It was hot and there had

been more than the usual tardiness in regard to the schedule time. She had written announcing her arrival, and forgotten to have the letter posted. She had determined to telegraph, and at the last moment had been too hurried. In consequence, when she alighted at the station, the only passenger, there was no one to meet her, and the only conveyance a rusty-looking carriage, with a horse whose ribs looked like a diagram of the field of Waterloo.

She threw herself on the mercy of the driver, who had donned a napless overcoat to preserve him from dust, and, after an inaudible prayer that she might live through the experience of springless jolts, endless hills and the choking dust of an unwatered highway, she clambered in, tearing her filmy dress, forgetting to give directions concerning her trunk—they had to drive back, after they had gone a mile, to remedy the omission. She tried to dispel her irritation by a running fire of question and comment to the driver, who responded with monosyllables, until an interrogation concerning the visitors at Mrs. de la Mar's roused his interest. His own enthusiasm communicated itself to Mrs. Deming. Fatigue and irritation were alike forgotten as she realized that she had already put her hands on one of the threads of the tangle she had come to unravel or coil tighter, as circumstances invited. She kept pace with his confessions with a running fire of comment.

So there was a young girl there who looked like an angel, or a big doll with golden hair and blue eyes!

She had not been expected either, it seemed!

She was the daughter of an old school friend of Mrs. de la Mar's!

She had known of the two masculine guests!

She had inquired particularly at what point of the road it was necessary to alight in order to get into the rose garden!

She had left an old cloak, hat, gloves and shoes under the seat, and had told

him to take them around to the house and leave them with her maid. He had not done so yet, for he had had to go back to the station for something!

She was beautiful when she took them off—all in white!

A sudden inspiration seized Mrs. Deming. "I will take them myself," she declared. She was determined to find out what the masquerade meant. No woman took all that trouble unless there was an underlying motive, and an underlying motive had always to do with a man—which man was it, the statesman or the nephew? Was this unexpected circumstance going to help her or hinder her?

It was not a pleasant task to toil along a winding path with a heavy bundle of clothes; neither was it picturesque. Fortunately for Edith Deming, pride in her personal appearance was not one of her failings, and the possibility of finding something that would aid her in the coming struggle for the man she loved was compensation enough.

They were sitting as they had been the day before—the ingénue on the pile of scarlet cushions, the statesman and Kenneth Bigelow on either side, helping her to tea and bon-bons. In the last twenty-four hours the situation had changed from the tenseness of incessant criticism into the relaxation of a house-party that has no *raison d'être* except the enjoyment of the moment. The ingénue was responsible for this. She refused to see that there was any reason why she should not engage the unremitting attention of the two men from breakfast till bedtime. She was in her most disarming mood. Mrs. de la Mar was worldly to the core; but even a woman of the world may have her suspicions lulled by one who seems to have no ulterior object in life but eating nougat, chasing a ball on the links, or playing blind pig with a man old enough to be her father.

Into this peaceful circle entered Edith Deming, perspiring and flushed, in her arms a weird-shaped bundle, her gown

torn at the edges, in her eyes the twofold expression of one who has acted from impulse and is already questioning its judgment, while she sees no way of extricating herself from the burden of its dilemma.

Mrs. de la Mar rose with a cry of welcoming surprise. She had a most profound affection for Edith Deming. The eyes of the ingénue widened a little as she looked at the bundle; then she went on placidly munching chocolate.

The incongruity of the package with her guest's appearance at last excited Mrs. de la Mar's risibles. "For heaven's sake, Edith, what have you there? You look as if you were clothing a charitable institution by hand."

There was a momentary pause while the four waited expectantly, their eyes on the awkwardly shaped encumbrance.

The new arrival held it out to the ingénue. "The driver said you left it in the carriage, and I saved him the trouble of bringing it to the house."

"It is so kind of you," said the ingénue, and in her voice was the tone of gratitude. "They are Jane's." She turned with a winning smile, which disclosed tiny white teeth. "You see, my feet never touch the ground, though I sit tall. You have noticed it," and she appealed to the statesman, who nodded assent, and then wondered if he had. "I borrowed these of Jane to raise my feet."

Mrs. Deming looked at her, skeptically, but the gaze that met her own would have disarmed suspicion in the mind of a Scotland Yard detective.

IV

No matter how big the house may be, there is always the living place where the heart of life throbs. At Ilkley Villa the great hall, which divided the rooms as an artery sweeps through a body, was the favorite rendezvous, even in the warmest days. The Japanese wind-bells hung there tinkled musically, and the vistas of green through the open doors, stretching in

long arcades whichever way the eye turned, were delightful to the sense. At one end of the hall an enormous desk, stacked with every possible appliance, invited to correspondence. Few could resist the magnetism of that corner; letters that would never have been written else owed their genesis to it; quarrels were made up, invitations given, secrets divulged; in a word, it was one of the silent influences of a well-managed home.

On this particular day the heat prevented out-of-door amusement; one by one the members of the household disappeared without excuse, and the place was, after a while, deserted. But only for a time. Its serenity was suddenly disturbed by the quick click of heels on the uncarpeted stairs, by the rustle of silken draperies and the quick breathing of an impatient body as Edith Deming ran down the stairs. She always ran up and down stairs, indifferent to temperature as she was to indigestion. She had no especial object in her quest, unless it might be to find her hostess and have a heart-to-heart talk; to watch with cat-like eye the statesman and Kenneth Bigelow, or, perhaps, to try once more, as she had tried numberless times in the last few days, to detect Blanche Adrian in a moment of forgetfulness, when she could find out if the girl was really as ingenuous as she seemed.

But the barren hall mocked these half-formed ambitions. She sighed. What could she do?—rest, sew, read?—a trio of amusements for the woman whose mind is reposeful, not for one whose constant need of expression seeks more extravagant means. She paced back and forth from one end of the house to the other, from door to door; but the sun-flecked path offered no inducement for her to continue her walk outside. She turned for the fifth time, when her restless glance caught sight of the desk, with its paper, inkwells, blotters and the like, carefully arranged for the day's correspondence. Apparently she was the first, for the spotlessness of the materials spoke in silent eloquence of recent care. She

whirled suddenly toward the corner and threw herself on the stiff, high-backed chair, whose rigid lines and uncushioned firmness offered no distraction to mental stimulus.

She wrote two letters in the order a child maintains who, given bread and cake, saves the cake until the last, in order to enjoy the delight of anticipation. The first was blotted, the second would have been if she had not rewritten it in order to avoid disturbing the fastidious sense of the recipient.

The initial one read:

MY DEAR HUSBAND:

Arrived safely. You were mistaken as usual. Mrs. de la Mar was perfectly delighted to see me, and the house is not full. I don't know when I shall be back, and I don't suppose you care.

EDITH.

The last one was considerably longer. She hesitated for a moment over the superlative, and then, with a shrug of the shoulders, wrote it firmly:

DEAREST:

The situation is tense—that is certain; and as I wrote you before, on some excuse or other you must come, for I can do nothing. Mr. Robertson is more or less under the influence of Mrs. de la Mar—just how much I don't know; not enough, I should judge, to outweigh his prudence. I am as sure as anyone can be of anything in this world that there is nothing decided as yet, but it may come any moment. His attitude toward the nephew is that of one who is studying, but he shows a decided trend in his favor. I have sounded Mrs. de la Mar again and again, but without success. Her evident anxiety is, however, another reason for the belief that things are in the balance. Look over the letters and find something that needs a personal interview; or, better, take the bull by the horns, tell him you have heard these rumors and that you wanted to be the first to notify him. These are merely suggestions, but come you must.

There is a young girl here who will bear watching. She is apparently as innocent as she looks, and that arouses my suspicions, for no one could be. She is a young thing—in years, I mean, but if she be what I suspect, I could sit at her feet and imbibe wisdom. I imagine that she is here with a purpose, and that purpose has to do with one of the two men—which one is the mystery. Her attentions are equally divided, and, I should say, equally acceptable. If there is to be a rivalry it may help your cause. Come and see for yourself if what I suspect be true.

She had reached the end of the page; there was just room for her signature. She started to write it; then a sudden impulse seized her; she turned the page, and continued:

Think of what I said to you when we parted—only think! Let us be happy together! The divorce can be arranged; it must be! I have made myself so disagreeable that I know he needs only a sufficient excuse to grant my wish.

She signed her name hurriedly, blotted and tore two envelopes, threw the remains in the copper wastebasket at the side of the desk, and then walked to the mail-bag at the further end of the hall, in which she placed her letters. Writing had not calmed her mood, and, in spite of the midday heat, she determined to venture forth and seek an oasis of shade.

She was followed by the statesman, who strolled into the hall from his own room, where he had been perusing some private letters. He had come with a purpose, and the attractions of lawns and far-off tree-tops, like waving fans, did not disturb his mind, trained to concentration.

He seated himself at the desk and drew its appliances toward him. He wrote deliberately, after trying the pens, placing the chair so that the light fell full on the page, and measuring to see that the paper should be folded once instead of twice to fit the envelopes. His letter read:

DEAR ——:

Further in relation to our correspondence, I will say that I have decided to accept the post. I must ask that the matter be not made public until I have an opportunity for a personal conference. In regard to the secretaryship, which you say will be a position of great importance and considerable prestige, I could not consider for a moment the man you suggest—I will give my reasons, which will satisfy you fully, when we meet. I have two men in mind, and my stay here will determine the fitness of one—Mrs. de la Mar's nephew, you have heard of him; the other is my present secretary, John Townsend. As you say, I shall require a man whose trustworthiness and ability are beyond the normal.

My regards to your family. You say that your wife told Mrs. Deming. She is here, but has not given a hint of her information. I shall really believe that a woman

can keep a secret. When will the official notification be sent me? I hope the matter will not leak out before then, as it might tie my hands somewhat.

It had taken him a long time to write the letter, for he weighed every word carefully. Having signed it, he leaned back in a moment of satisfaction, and, forgetting that he was not in his own swinging desk-chair, attempted to turn. In doing so, he put out his foot and upset the copper waste-holder.

He picked it up to restore it to its place. There were but three strips of paper in it, and these his eye could not avoid. An envelope torn half-way across had on it the name of his secretary, and on a jagged edge of paper, in the same handwriting, the word "Dearest" invited speculation.

He looked thoughtfully out of the wide doorway to watch Mrs. Deming as she strolled toward a distant point of shade. Had he been ten years younger he would have whistled; as it was, he contented himself with a stare of amazement.

He was irritated, too, for he had believed his secretary as free from feminine entanglement as he was himself. He had never manifested any interest in his life, and there was no reason why he should be surprised to learn of hidden depths; it was irrational, he knew, and he was as much angered at the irrationality as he was at its cause.

So, Edith Deming's unexpected appearance must have something to do with his affairs. She had, of course, told his secretary of the coming appointment and had herself come to watch and report. He strolled up and down the hall with his hands in his pockets. She was a dangerous woman, with her impulsive ways and passionate temperament. It would not be safe to have about him a man who was under her influence. It was well that he had discovered this affair in time. His choice, it seemed, was narrowed. Yet, perhaps he was doing John Townsend an injustice. He might be the unwilling object of an

impetuous woman's adoration. Then he questioned: Would even a woman like Edith Deming commence a letter to a man in that style unless she were sure it would be acceptable?

As he walked out of the door, at one end of the hall, thinking deeply, the ingénue floated in from the other. She seated herself at the desk and arranged her muslin draperies gracefully about her feet, leaving only one of them in view. She was very fresh and dainty, and looked not unlike the big doll to which the driver of the carriage had likened her.

She, too, selected her pen and paper with care, then commenced to write, stealing glances now and then into the world outside, up the stairs, through the doors, as if she awaited someone. The pen moved languidly over the perfumed paper.

MY DEAR MAMMA:

I arrived safely, and Mrs. de la Mar was perfectly delighted to see me. I made my début through the rose garden, and it was successful. The wraps that I left in the carriage were returned to me the next day by another unexpected guest, a Mrs. Deming, who found them under the seat and brought them to me. I wish you could have seen her—she thought she had unraveled an intricate situation with *un grand coup*, but by the time I had finished with her she was as flustered in her mind as in her body—and that is saying a great deal. I have not yet made up my mind which one of Mrs. de la Mar's guests is to have the honor of leading me to the altar; in fact, there is something in the atmosphere here that eludes me. But I shall find out what it is before long; trust me. The nephew has moments of being distrait, the statesman is restless, Mrs. de la Mar acts like a hen watching chickens. Mrs. Deming suspects everybody of something—even me; fancy that! I am really the only cool and composed one in the party, and I have the most at stake. It is hard to settle one's future with a lot of people who are perfectly callous as to its importance, but I have not changed my mind. It will be settled and your long waiting is to have its reward. Within the shadow of the marriage certificate you will regain your health and strength. There is nothing like a marriage certificate for mothers afflicted with insomnia—take my word for it. Don't despair!

Your loving daughter,

BLANCHE.

P.S. You are to be absolutely obdurate if any admirer appears.

She supplemented this letter with two others. The first one was directed to a certain Rudolph Vanderlinck.

MY DEAR RUDOLPH:

It is impossible. Fate is unkind, but we must bow to its decree. My guardian and mother are bitterly opposed, and I am too weak to resist. This is indeed good-bye. Do not attempt to see me; it would only make it harder. We shall be reunited, I am sure, in death, though this life separates us.

Yours,

B.

And the second to Mr. Clarence Bourne.

MY DEAR CLARENCE:

Elopement is out of the question; at the last moment my heart misgives me. How could I even think of being so heartless to my poor, widowed mother! You will forget me, I know—this is the irony of life—while I shall never be able to erase you from the tablets of my memory. I have been sent away. Do not write or try to see me; I could not bear it.

Yours,

B.

"It is just as well," said the ingénue, as she daintily moistened the stamps and placed them accurately on the envelopes, "to be off with the old loves before one is on with the new."

One of the new came into the hall at that moment. There was a faint flush on his cheek from his walk, and his eyes were shining. He smiled at the ingénue with a smile of one comrade to another. "It's a shame, isn't it," he asked, "that it is too hot for golf?" and then, noticing the pile of letters at her hand, "I must write to my father. I should have written before."

The ingénue made way for him at the desk. "Tell me," she said, with feminine curiosity, "are you and your father such chums that you can't be separated for a few days without corresponding?"

"Oh, no; it isn't that." And Kenneth smiled at the thought of a chumship between his austere parent and himself. "It is merely a matter of business. I promised to let him know about something, and though there

really isn't anything to write, I ought to let him know that at least."

"Know what?"

"That there hasn't anything happened."

So there were others besides herself who expected something to happen! This accounted for the atmosphere that had puzzled her. She thought over details. How obtuse she had been! She recalled Mrs. de la Mar's letter and her evident desire to have no other guests while the Honorable Claridge Robertson and her nephew were with her. Of course that was it; everyone knew how ambitious Mrs. de la Mar was for her nephew. Well, she certainly had been charming under the infliction of having her carefully laid plans spoiled. Being selfish herself, there was nothing the ingénue admired so much as unselfishness in others.

She must find out if her intuition were correct. "Is he so obdurate?" she asked, softly.

The young man turned to her. "So auntie has told you! No, he isn't obdurate, exactly; one can't blame a man for being particular as to those who shall stand with him. I should have no respect for him if he were not; but it is hard for me to wait, for I am anxious to have my future settled."

Apparently there was another future hanging in the balance.

"Is there any reason why he should hesitate?" she asked.

"None that I know of. I have not had any great amount of training in politics, it is true, but that will come; our opinions agree perfectly. I have some influence, which would be directed his way, and I am entirely free; being a bachelor himself, I presume that fact is of more importance to him than it would be to a man of family."

"Oh!" the ingénue breathed, as if she had just received a slight shock. She curled up in a corner of the couch and watched Kenneth while he wrote his letter, wondering, meanwhile, from this new

standpoint, how the consummation of her own plans would affect those of the two men. She interrupted only twice, once to ask, hesitatingly, "If you don't succeed in convincing him, what then?"

He laid down his pen and answered her with a hopeless expression. "I have promised my father that if I don't succeed with Mr. Robertson I will go into business. You see, I am the only child and he wishes it, but I loathe it. I have neither the ambition nor the inclination for commercial life."

The second interruption was: "There is no third choice?"

"None. I thought at one time there might be, but that time has passed. I will not dabble in art. One must have genius or stay out of it—there is no excuse for, and no pleasure in, mediocrity."

He resumed his letter, which read:

MY DEAR FATHER:

I have thought over our conversation on the night of my coming away. I will keep my promise to you, and I agree with you that I have been undecided long enough. I have left no stone unturned to convince the Honorable Mr. Robertson of my fitness for his approval and help. If with so much in my favor—friends, opportunity and leisure—I cannot do this, I certainly could not convince others, and shall accept his ultimatum on my political career, which means that, if unfavorable, I shall follow in your footsteps and endeavor to forget my aspirations.

Your son,
KENNETH.

The statesman had overtaken Edith Deming and strolled by her side, after excusing himself for lighting a cigar. They talked of many things. Underneath the statesman's apparent nonchalance an occasional sting, hardly a pin-prick, cleverly goaded Mrs. Deming to the point of exasperation. Why did he insinuate this, and this, and this? was her mental comment. Had he intended that, or was she too quick in her conclusions? He certainly meant—but, did he, with that placid voice and careless manner?

He congratulated himself as he

saw her gradually writhing to the point where her natural impulsiveness would break the bond of control she had placed upon her speech. He had known her for years and accurately gauged her capacity for restraint.

The ingénue and Kenneth Bigelow stepped through the long French windows to the porch and looked about them, undecided whether to try the lawn or the chairs.

The tall, graceful youth in his light flannels gave Mrs. Deming an unconscious excuse for relief.

"Of all the inconsequent, futile beauty men I have ever seen, recommend me to Kenneth Bigelow. To think of Mrs. de la Mar having such a nephew!"

The statesman noted her flashing eyes and cheeks, through which the angry blood seemed about to burst, with inward amusement.

He spoke languidly. "Then you don't think he'll do? You don't approve my choice!"

She turned on him like a tigress. "You have made your choice? How could you forget the man who has sacrificed his life to you? Haven't you any heart, or feeling, or appreciation?"

"We may not be thinking of the same man, but if we are I am sure that any lack of appreciation on my part is more than balanced by your own."

Edith Deming bit her lips. "Oh, I know I have made a fool of myself—I always do. I am not fit to carry other people's secrets when I can't keep my own. Why did you goad me as you did?"

"To convince myself finally that you were what I have always suspected—the most indiscreet woman of my acquaintance."

V

THE ingénue stood at the mirror with a hand-glass in position. She was *en negligée*, and above the laces

rose a neck of marble whiteness. She was gazing reflectively at a dimple near her shoulder-blade. "If any other woman had that," she said to the patient Jane, "she would have her dresses cut accordingly. But can I? Oh, no, guimpes, covered yokes and everything else that fits my rôle! It's a wonder society doesn't decree that the *débutante* shall be put in a meal-sack and have it tied about her neck."

Jane stood with the offending dress on her arm, ready to throw it over the blond head.

"It's a shame," she continued, "a perfect shame! There isn't a neck in the house can touch it, and what good does it do?"

She counted on her fingers. "Even supposing that I accept one of the two men who want me—who will want me, I mean—it will be three solid months before I can appear in *décolleté* gowns. Three months gone, simply gone out of my life; it's a sin!—what Edith Deming, with her sense of distinction, would call a beastly outrage."

She stood like a stoic while Jane buttoned the corsage carefully up the back, then wriggled her shoulders with her head thrown backward. "Not a glimpse of it, not a glimpse; that's the worst of a country dressmaker. Madame Lance would have lessened the fullness in that particular place without your saying a word, but that rustic idiot has actually made it thicker right in that spot; you couldn't see the dimple with a magnifying-glass. Marry! Mamma needn't worry. I'd marry, if it were only to show that dimple to an unsuspecting world."

Five minutes later she knocked timidly at Mrs. de la Mar's door. Mrs. de la Mar was putting the finishing touches to a toilette. There was no lack of generosity to an unsuspecting world here, and shoulder-straps alone promised immunity from catastrophe.

The ingénue's eyes were lowered. "Dear Mrs. de la Mar, do you think this dress is immodest? You see, the lace is quite transparent and I feel a little——"

Mrs. de la Mar blushed, actually

blushed, as she caught her own reflection in the glass by the side of the tall, slim figure. "My dear child, what a notion! Of course not! Your gown is lovely and quite correct; it is all very well for us old married women to defy proprieties; we've got to gain attention in some way, but you young, beautiful things don't need to do anything—the simpler your toilettes the more effective. I think your mother dresses you in the most exquisite taste. Oh, our white muslin days! If we could only have them back! I envy you every time I see you in one of those gowns."

"Then you don't think it is too—too—what Edith Deming would call suggestive? What does she mean by that word, anyway? She actually butters her bread with it."

"Oh, Edith has a lot of words that don't mean anything; they just fill in, you know. You can't expect every word to mean something; that would make conversation utterly impossible; the mind must have some rest."

"Yes, I presume so. Do you object to my watching you?"

Mrs. de la Mar did not relish the big blue eyes fixed so unflinchingly on her mature charms, but she nodded assent.

"Tell me, dear Mrs. de la Mar—you won't think I am strange to ask you this question, but I really have reasons," and the ingénue sighed deeply, "for coming to you just now. Everyone says—and by everyone I mean mamma and Edith Deming and one or two more—that you married for love. Now, if you had a daughter, say, like me, would you advise her to marry for love?"

Mrs. de la Mar and Mrs. Deming had had a conference just before they parted to dress for dinner. This conference had concerned the ingénue. "You needn't tell me," said Edith Deming, "that she is as innocent as she looks. I have had my suspicions for a long time, and to-day I told a story before her on purpose, which no one at her age and with her appearance should have known the meaning of. I blushed when I told it, and she blushed when she heard it, but I found out what I wanted to—

that she is posing, and posing for a purpose. That girl has designs on one of the men here—which one I can't tell, the little cat! I would say your nephew, if it were any other girl, but I am not sure—she is just as likely to have her eye on Claridge Robertson, and there is no fool, you know, like an old fool. He is just the age to be caught by that type of femininity."

Mrs. de la Mar had not been entirely easy in her mind concerning the ingénue, and Mrs. Deming's words did not quiet her uneasiness. She thought quickly. So it was her nephew, after all; and if this girl should succeed, under her own roof, too, in making the young man fall in love with her, his career was ruined. Had not Claridge Robertson expressly said that he would further no man's political aspirations who was married under forty? The blue eyes fixed unflinchingly on her changing countenance demanded that she should hide as much as possible her perturbation, unless she wished to play directly into the waiting hands.

"My dear Blanche, I will talk to you just as if I were indeed your mother. As one who has had the benefit of experience and of unlimited observation, I should say that, worldly as it must sound to one so young and—and innocent—marriage for love is in nine times out of ten a failure. Of course in my own case there have been compensations; but even so, there is much that I cannot tell, which might convince if I could. Love is the most unsatisfactory foundation on which to base married life. Respect, admiration, social prestige—these are the things that satisfy in the end." Then she thought: "I'd hate to have her marry Claridge, but if it must be one of the two, it is better that he should be the victim."

"You probably won't understand me now, but you will sometime, when I say to you that the truly happy woman is the one whose husband stands out from the crowd, and brings to her, without effort, all the admiration, honor and emoluments for which ninety-nine women out of every hun-

dred are willing to sell their souls. Love, my dear, is a Midsummer madness, repented of as soon as yielded to." To herself, she added: "I do hope I am making this strong enough."

"Then you don't think—" the ingénue's voice had a tone of pained reproach—"that two young people, say, like—well, any two young people could be happy without luxury and fame and position, just living simple, natural lives, away somewhere, by themselves?"

"Not in our day and generation, my dear. That is a dream of the past. We are born with complex needs, and the older we get the more those needs dominate us. To-day you think you could be happy anywhere with the man you loved and who loved you, but in five years you would surely discover a hundred things necessary to your happiness, and if he could not supply those needs you would find your love changing to indifference, and indifference to positive dislike. You would wake from your dream to find yourself tied to a failure, your own ambitions fretting you continually like those of a caged bird." And again she thought: "I am actually bursting my dress in my earnestness."

"But"—the ingénue's voice had a ring of hope—"supposing he were not a failure; supposing your love and companionship and all that were sufficient to stimulate him, and he reached greater heights because of you than he ever could without?"

"Blanche!" Mrs. de la Mar cried. Then she checked herself, and thought: "What can I say to influence her? What an awful thing to have happen just now!"

She stopped dressing and walked nearer the girl, whose eyes were downcast.

"That is the rock on which many a young woman before you has rent her life-boat. It is like marrying a drunkard to reform him. No, a woman never really makes a man, nor really influences him; that is one of the illusions of poetry and romance. In real life a man makes himself.

There is one thing she can do, however; she can drag him down and back. She can hang about his neck and suffocate him with her weight; she can meet him when opportunity beckons, and turn him from the path he should follow."

There were real tears in Mrs. de la Mar's eyes. She dabbed her face with some cobwebby lace and then retouched the very tip of her nose with rice powder. At this second application of the powder she realized the necessity for restraint. Her tones were more subdued when she continued.

"Blanche, you have come to me in a moment of need. You are at the parting of ways—it is always the crucial time in a girl's life when she has to make her own choice—and abide by it forever. And there is nearly always in a woman's life this choice—it is like a man's selection of professions, only with the woman she has but the alternatives of love or ambition, and, unlike the man, she cannot retrace the step once taken. Listen! Give up this dream of yours. You are beautiful, young and attractive; with that capital you can have everything worth while; don't sacrifice it for foolish sentiment. Take the advice of a woman who has seen all sides of life; who is, of course, perfectly unprejudiced——"

"Of course," murmured the ingénue.

"—perfectly unprejudiced in this matter, and who, if you were her own daughter, would say to you that in the long run—in the long run, mind you, for I do not deny that she would miss something on the way, as the fatal mark of imperfection is on everything—a woman will be happier and look back in middle age, thankful that she had not been allured by such a will-o'-the-wisp. I can't point out to you in all my acquaintance one marriage founded on pure love that has proved a success, and I can show you hundreds of the other kind that are models."

There was a silence; then the ingénue arose. "I thank you for advising

me. You see, I depend on poor mamma so much, and when we are separated——"

Mrs. de la Mar stroked her face, and tried to read there if her arguments had availed. "Think of what I have said, dear; it comes from the heart."

"I am sure it does," said the ingénue, softly, as she closed the door.

After she had gone Mrs. de la Mar sank back into a chair, completely unnerved. "This is so sudden! Of course she means Kenneth. I am sure nothing has happened yet, but it may at any moment. And he has had absolutely no experience. The first affair is always serious with a man—always means matrimony. I believe everything Edith says is true: she came with a purpose. What can I do? I can't send her home; she was clever enough to get here; she would stay in spite of me. At least I can keep her from tête-à-têtes with Kenneth; that much I will do."

Mrs. Deming was arranging a loosened curl.

"Come in," she called, curtly, in response to a gentle knock.

The ingénue stood there, and after a moment's scrutiny of the room and its occupant, walked in and closed the door behind her.

"My dear Mrs. Deming, how lovely you look! Your maid isn't here. Shall I hook your dress for you?"

"It is already hooked, thank you."

"Oh, really! I thought—but you have such lovely shoulders! Do you think my gown is immodest? You see, the lining is cut out and the lace is very thin."

"If it were as low as you would like it to be, it would be immodest; as it is, I think you need not lose any sleep."

"Mrs. Deming, you don't like me."

"Not at all—I hate insincerity."

"Why do you think me insincere?"

"Well, for one thing, what business had you to know what I meant by that story I told to-day?"

"What story?—oh, that one on the

veranda? Why, my dear Mrs. Deming, your voice would have given it away to a lap-dog. A woman never uses that tone unless she is saying something she ought not to——"

Mrs. Deming moved, impatiently. "Oh, well, we won't discuss the matter. What's the use? Is there anything I can do for you? Have you forgotten your handkerchief? There are a lot in that box."

"It is more serious than that."

"Well, what is it? We have only ten minutes before the dinner hour."

"Yes, I know. I just felt as if I couldn't eat my dinner until I had asked you——"

"What?"

"Oh, Mrs. Deming, don't make it hard for me. You are so unsympathetic, and I want your advice because I know if you don't like me, perhaps for that very reason, you will tell me things just as they are—you always do that, I know."

The interview with the Honorable Claridge Robertson was too fresh in Mrs. Deming's mind for her to bear this insinuation meekly. "Well, I am sure to do that. You had better be careful. You probably won't like it."

The ingénue sank down on a low stool and had Mrs. Deming at a decided disadvantage. "Tell me," she murmured, from her humble seat; "do you think it is possible, just possible, for a young girl—well, say like me—to be happy in a marriage where she does not love?"

"It is just as I told Louise," thought Mrs. Deming as she looked triumphantly at her reflection in the glass. "She is going to trap the old man. She sha'n't have him; it will ruin everything. If she's to get a husband, it would much better be that pink-checked nephew. I feel sorry for Louise, but I can't have Robertson twisted around her little fingers—that means good-bye to all my plans. So, it really is Robertson. I didn't believe she was quite so heartless—at her age to have such an ambition!" Then, aloud: "You

want me to tell you exactly what I think?"

"That is why I am here; without mamma, you know, I am all at sea, and there are reasons——"

"Oh, you need not tell me the reasons; I can guess some of them."

"Please don't, Mrs. Deming."

"Very well. For a woman like you—are going to be, there is nothing like *le mariage d'amour*. In fact, it is your only safety. Nothing but that can help you."

"Help me—from what?"

"From yourself. You have a withered soul. It needs a great passion, with all the sacrifices and delights that are implied in the term, to rejuvenate it."

"A withered soul—what do you mean?"

"I mean that your soul was born a thousand years before your body. How they got together I don't know—I am not psychologic. You are uncanny. I always feel my flesh creep when you come near me."

"You are not very complimentary."

"You asked me for the truth; I have told you."

"But why, Mrs. Deming, why wouldn't ambition accomplish this, supposing your idea is correct? Isn't ambition a great passion, too, and doesn't that have its sacrifices and its delights?"

"With a difference. Ambition is the passion of men; love, the passion of God. There is as much difference as there is between the atmosphere of a crowded street and that of an empty cathedral."

"But mamma and my guardian and everyone else urge me to marry for money or social position, to look out for the main chance, to settle myself well."

"They are all mistaken. I married for that, and can speak from experience. Ambition!" and Edith Deming gave her shoulders an impatient toss. "Do you know what that means? It is to give your life and strength and happiness for husks; to get what you want after you have lost the power to

enjoy it; to pass by the real for the shadow; to nurture something gentle and caressing in your arms, which grows suddenly and strangles you with its weight and power. Ambition—it is the sin of the fallen angels. To think that a girl like you, at the most adorable period of life, facing possibilities of happiness of which you, with all your mature insight, cannot have dreamed, should hesitate—even for a second! If I had your chance—or my own over again!”

“But don’t you believe,” the ingénue persisted, “that if you married the man you loved, and he was young and poor and your marrying him hampered his career, after a while you would get to hate each other? He would blame you for that, and you would want things he couldn’t give you.”

“Not if you loved each other in the beginning; no sacrifice could alienate you. It would bring you closer together, and, after a while, you would learn that all the things you thought of so much importance really are not. You would learn the lesson, anyway; better learn it together. We don’t need very much in this life, if we have the supreme thing.”

“Then you think, to continue your quotation, that I should fling away ambition?”

“Decidedly. I would say that to any young girl—to you, most of all; for only in love can you find all you have missed—illusions, dreams, the ecstasy of selflessness and the joy of youth. You have been deprived of all that. It is your opportunity to regain it.”

Edith wondered, in the pause that ensued, if her words had carried conviction.

A moment later the ingénue turned at the door to say: “You accuse me, Mrs. Deming, of posing. Don’t you think it a sort of affectation for a woman in an adorable gown of white satin, with duchesse-lace flounces twelve inches deep, and with her corsage covered with diamonds, to tell a young girl to marry for love?”

She closed the door behind her.

If looks could slay, the ingénue would have tumbled outside. As it was, she continued her way, smilingly. “Thank goodness,” she murmured, softly, “that’s all settled. Mrs. Deming will give me every possible chance to have my tête-à-tête with Kenneth and Mrs. de la Mar with Claridge. I’ve been balked long enough.”

Edith Deming only glared after the retreating figure for a moment; then her face assumed its natural expression. “After all,” she said to herself, “I don’t blame her. We live in an age where it is impossible to convince by words, and our actions are entirely incongruous. But could she only know—” she caught just then the reflection of her many gems—“if I could only assure her that if tears could dim their light, they would be like the ashes in the grate, I might save her. My duty is plain. I must keep her away from Claridge Robertson—that is evident. I shall not be entirely selfish in the matter, either, for I believe just what I told her, that she may be saved through love, and in that way only.”

There was a new guest at dinner that night. By the late train John Townsend came, with a lot of private letters and certain information concerning a great political mission which, it was rumored, was to be conferred on his chief. They were closeted a long time, while Claridge Robertson listened to these vague reports, pooh-poohing them with the air of the statesman who may mean much or little by his attitude of laughing dissent.

Mrs. de la Mar treated the young man cordially, and overruled his faint protests. “It is the week-end, and surely you don’t have to go back to town tomorrow; at least spend the Sunday with us.” Her invitation was seconded by her husband and by Claridge Robertson, who looked at his secretary with a new interest, and for the first time in his life treated him with the respect a man shows to one who has suddenly exhibited unexpected qualities, be they good or bad, to his own advantage or against it.

VI

THE moon of Midsummer hung alluringly over the tree-tops. The air was still—so still that it awed. The moon glade invited, as if at the end of its silvery perspective might be the fairyland of childhood, which each grown-up heart recalls with sadness as one of the mysteries of life that has never been dispelled. It was Nature's masquerade; everything was in glamour. The day, with its pitiless verities, was still far distant, and the spell of the unusual dominated every heart.

On the wide porch the party of six—for Mr. de la Mar, according to habit, had withdrawn to the library—were silent, subdued by the beauty of the scene. Occasionally a voice would penetrate the stillness, but a continued or general conversation seemed so in-harmonious that no one attempted it.

Finally Mrs. de la Mar arose. The fear and tumult in her heart oppressed so that she could endure the restraint no longer. "Come with me, Kenneth," she said to her nephew. "Let us walk and talk."

She looked about, secure in the knowledge that, whatever happened, she had saved him, for this night at least, from the catastrophe that threatened.

The quartette left behind did not move or seek to follow. The ingénue was sitting so that her profile, outlined by the heavenly light, might have served an artist for one of the seraphim, the Angel of the Tomb, or a Saint Cecilia. The statesman was a prey to disquieting thoughts. Mrs. Deming was torn by conflicting desires. Already the resolution formed in her room before dinner was melting away. Why should she lose these silver moments? The ingénue would probably outwit her in the end anyhow, and then she would have gained nothing. She might never have such an opportunity again; it was seldom that "the time and the place and the loved one" were all together. There was great danger, it is true, in leaving the statesman and the ingénue alone at

such a time, but she had never yet allowed purpose to control inclination, and it was too late to begin. She fought the battle for a while bravely, then turned of a sudden to John Townsend. "You have never seen the rose garden; it must be glorious in this light; let me show it to you."

There was nothing to do but acquiesce, yet Townsend hesitated; there was danger in her tone, and the other two did not help his quandary. The statesman, after a quick look of appreciation, gone almost as it flashed on them, relapsed into his reverie, and the ingénue had, apparently, not heard and had no wish to hear. Townsend rose, straightened the stoop in his shoulders, and made a last protest against the inevitable.

"Can't we induce you to join us?" He spoke directly to the ingénue.

"If you don't mind, I think I will stay here. I do not believe I could endure the rose garden; it must be too beautiful, and it would hurt me. I can't stand too much pain or too much joy." Her eyes were following the two shadows moving far off amid the trees, and Edith Deming noted the glance.

"I believe she really is in love with Kenneth Bigelow," was her mental comment, "and I guess it is all right." Then she turned to John Townsend. "Come." There was, for the first and only time, an undercurrent of command in her voice, and with head bent he followed her down the steps and around the corner of the house to the path of roses.

There was a little pause, and then the statesman woke to the knowledge that he was alone with the ingénue. He looked at her, abashed. What could he say to such an unsullied soul? Precedents were at fault, for it was long since he had come closely in touch with one so inexperienced and so unmoved by the merely earthly. What did one talk about to embodied spirits? Was there anything in his past that would lead him to suppose for one moment that he could interest a creature like the one before him, who looked as if, at an unwary word or glance,

she might melt away into the silvery sheen and disappear forever from mortal ken?

The ingénue helped his embarrassment by speaking first.

"Tell me, dear statesman—" she had borrowed Mrs. de la Mar's favorite mode of address—"why have you never married?"

The statesman felt his feet touch *terra firma* once more, and breathed deeply. "Why have I never married?" Sure enough, why had he not? He struggled for an answer that would satisfy her.

"I had a dream once," he began, hesitatingly; "it was only a boyish dream, gone almost as soon as experienced, and since then I have fought battles, strenuous battles. I could not ask any woman to stand by my side in the rush and roar of those days, and now it is too late."

"Too late?" The tone of the ingénue left nothing to be desired. Separated into its component elements there was a mixture, one-third interest, one-third sympathy and one-third provocation.

"Yes; I am too old now."

"Oh, no; not too old. You seem to me, in some ways, younger than any of us."

"Not younger than you, my dear," and the statesman's hand rested on the slim fingers which were, in some way, very near at this crucial moment; "not younger than you. You are out of place with us here; we are so worldly and so—inflexible; yes, inflexible."

"Are you inflexible?"

"I have believed myself so."

The ingénue noted the use of the past tense with satisfaction. She smiled engagingly into his face. "How do people who believe themselves inflexible become flexible?"

The statesman permitted himself a gentle pressure of the fingers, which were not withdrawn. "I presume," he answered, "that some woman's influence does it. I don't know any other way."

"And you—like to be inflexible?"

"I have never thought about it. It has simply been the natural effect of certain causes. One can't change general laws, you know, for particular cases."

The ingénue, to all outward seeming, felt the irritation of a refractory curl, and disengaged her hand to arrange it. The statesman waited, and in a moment the hand returned to its place.

"You don't seem to me old," she said, sweetly, and her face in the moonlight was lineless as an infant's, and with the infant's bloom on cheek and brow. "You seem to me like one who had gained wisdom and could help those who were uncertain and weak and without anyone—like people usually have, you know."

"Are you weak and uncertain and—without anyone?"

"Yes," and there was an accompanying sigh. "My guardian is grumpy and mamma doesn't understand me."

A half-hour before the statesman had looked at her, reclining with the halo of divinity about her brows, and had longed for her in his life, as a father longs for a daughter that has been denied him. Now there was something different in his expression; she and the moonlight together had succeeded in annihilating age, and he was only conscious that she was a very pretty woman, who had succeeded in setting his mind and soul in a turmoil.

"I should like to help you," and the pressure of interlacing fingers became still more emphatic "but a man can't help a woman unless—"

"Unless?"

He wondered if he had gone too far. He did not wish to frighten her; he himself hardly knew what he desired; but it was very evident that a hope, a resistless hope, a dream, different from the boy's dream as the man's life is different from the boy's life, was enveloping him in its power.

The ingénue had timed her provocations well. She had no wish to bring matters to a finality. The two

shadows she had been watching were coming nearer, nearer. The statesman was unconscious of them, for he was sitting with his back to the steps.

"Unless?" the ingénue repeated, insistently.

Love makes cowards of us all. The statesman, true to the diplomatic instinct, which forbade him to make a decisive move until he was sure of his ground, temporized a little.

"Do you think a woman could care for such a battered wreck as I am?"

"I am sure—" the steps were very close now—"I am sure," and she lowered her voice so that only he could hear, "that any woman would be proud."

The voice of Mrs. de la Mar interrupted. "Did you miss us? The garden was so beautiful that we forgot our duties." She looked about with surprise. "Why, where are Edith and Mr. Townsend?" She sank into a chair, and before the question could be answered, the ingénue turned quickly to the young man.

"Oh, Mr. Bigelow, what do you think? I lost my diary. Will you come with me to find it? It's awfully foolish to keep a diary, but it's much more foolish to lose it."

It was all done so quickly that before Mrs. de la Mar could finish her gasp they were out of sight. The statesman did not give her time for another.

"Louise—" his eyes were following the tall, slim figure in its clinging white—"you know a man is something like a family horse. The brute goes along year after year and everyone gets used to him, knows his gait and his limitations and his security. Then, one day, without warning or reason, he takes the bit in his teeth and crashes through every obstacle, has a kind of second wind, you see, which no one can account for. I have taken the bit in my teeth." He was still looking in the direction the young couple had taken.

"You mean——?"

She knew what he meant, but was trying to rearrange accustomed ideas to a new basis.

"I am thinking of marrying. I am tired and lonely, and I begin to feel that I have missed the best of life."

Unselfish as a woman may be in her general relations, she is never so unselfish as not to be pleased when she knows a man has refused to replace her image with that of another. Mrs. de la Mar did not really flatter herself that their early love affair had been the controlling cause of the statesman's single life, but she knew others thought so, and she accepted this pleasing tribute to feminine vanity. In consequence, her feelings were mixed. She was to lose much, but at least Kenneth might be saved. But would he be, or was this a new complication? If Kenneth antagonized the statesman, if he were suspected of rivalry, all would be over, and the hope she had cherished for years, which had become so insistent that it dominated her life, would be destroyed. She lost herself in a tangled maze of thought.

"She is very young," she said at last, hesitatingly.

"But a girl becomes a woman in a day, a moment; it is as quick as the transition from life to death, and as irrevocable. I can give her much that a younger man could not, and I would require less. It is a fair exchange, is it not?"

About the big hall wandered the two. The ingénue's search, to an observant glance, would not have suggested an intense desire to discover a missing article. But Kenneth, unsuspecting, went to the length of getting on his knees to look in impossible places. The ingénue turned suddenly to find him crouched in a supplicating attitude to gaze under an octagonal cabinet, whose short supports were but a couple of inches from the ground.

"Of course it isn't there; how

absurd! Do you suppose I fold up like a rubber-band and crawl into places like that when I make my confessions?"

"I didn't know: things are so unfeeling when they get lost. They don't seem to care where they go."

"Have you looked on the wicker couch?—it might be there. I know I had it just after you left me this afternoon. I remember that, distinctly." She was standing at the further end of the hall in the moon-lighted embrasure of the bay-window.

The couch was near the lamp, and as Kenneth displaced the silk cushions hurriedly, sure enough, between two of them was the diary, open, its white pages disclosing to his quick eye a few words written legibly. He could not have avoided reading them.

"Have you found it?" The voice that reached him was very alluring.

He advanced toward her. The color had flooded his face, as if his body were trying to express his confusion; he was opening and closing the silver clasp. He placed the book in her hand.

"Thank you so much." Then, with a glance at his face: "You have read it! How could you? I trusted you; I didn't think you were that sort——"

"I couldn't help it; it was open, and I looked at it before I knew."

The attitude of Kenneth Bigelow toward women had been that of the young man who has in him an innate sex-repulsion as to the feminine. He had suffered them in his life, and that was all. He deserved no praise for this, for it was the outcome of physical recoils, which are often allied to sensitive souls. He had met the invitations of generous smiles, clasped hands and insinuating words, with a frigid reserve of sentiment and a corresponding gallantry of manner that provoked while it pleased. No woman believed in that indifference to her sex which she was forced to admit in the specific case of her own

personality. Rumor, in lieu of facts on which to build its sky-scraper of imagination, based his attitude on a series of adventures that would have made *Don Juan* run a close race with *Sir Galahad* for place in the gallery of the immortals. That these alleged adventures were as far removed from the events of his real life as those of the typical man about town are from the anchorite's, made no difference to the people who listened and repeated. As his aunt had asserted in her soliloquy after the ingénue had implanted fear in her heart, he had been without the experience of a youthful love-affair, and was bound to take the first one seriously.

He was not timid if he was inexperienced, and after the initial seconds of bewilderment, he woke to the knowledge that he could understand for the first time why men made fools of themselves over women. After this knowledge had penetrated his mind, it was followed by the conclusion that he saw no adequate reason why he should exclude himself from so general a classification.

"Don't," said the ingénue, after a moment.

"Well, you certainly expected it, or you wouldn't have written that I had never kissed you."

"But I did not think you would see it."

He really believed this.

"Tell me," he said, after a few moments, as they stood close together in the window, "shall we tell them now or——?"

"Tell them what?"

"That we are going to be married." As Mrs. de la Mar had prophesied, Kenneth was taking this first affair very seriously.

"Going to be—married! Oh, I didn't think! I didn't think!"

"Think what, sweetheart? Of course you know when a man and woman love each other that is what it means. Don't be frightened."

"But mamma and my guardian! I am so afraid of them, I don't dare promise until they have given their

consent. Oh, what shall I do?" She clung to him in a spasm of assumed fear, and he soothed her.

"Perhaps it will be well, if you feel that way, to keep it to ourselves for a little while, until I can come to your home and ask in the conventional manner. There can be no objection."

"And you won't tell anybody—not breathe it to a soul? not to your aunt or to Mr. Robertson, or to anybody?"

"I promise you that I will not breathe it to a soul until you give me permission."

Mrs. de la Mar's voice called from the doorway, "Haven't you found your book yet, dear?"

There was a second's delay, just long enough for the whispered request, "Meet me in the rose garden at six to-morrow morning," and an acquiescence; then the ingénue spoke aloud:

"We have just found it under the cushions."

She went forward, while Kenneth, overcome with the stress of emotions, escaped through the window and walked rapidly toward a distant bench under a spreading elm, on which he threw himself face down, his arms clasped under his head.

The hot blood of youth coursed in his veins. It had come so quickly, so unexpectedly. He had suffered none of the agonies of doubt, wonder, exaltation and dread. It was as if he had been walking blindfold through life, content with his lot, and suddenly the bandage had been removed. The light, the light of love, hurt his sight; it was too splendid, too overpowering! He felt as if he must stay in the darkness, close his eyes again and again, and accustom himself by degrees to the dazzling radiance that was hereafter to beat about his path. His career! An hour ago it had seemed the only thing worth while. Now it was forgotten while he lost himself in dreams.

He had been unhappy of late,

though he had concealed his feelings under a careless demeanor. The days, which to others were apparently only ordinary hours, were to him the crucial ones of his life; he was hurt by the criticism to which he felt himself subjected, haunted by the fear that if he failed in convincing the statesman of his fitness he would be doomed to a career he abhorred, knowing that whichever path he chose someone would be hurt. He seemed to himself neither youth nor man, incapable of finding happiness in what he had once enjoyed, and shut off from the full joys of maturity. He suffered as a man suffers but once, in the first blind struggle with fate. Now all was changed. There was someone who needed him, who was young and weak—and his own. He had another to fight for, and he felt new courage and hope.

The ingénue said good night on the porch. "Do you think," she asked, irrelevantly, of Mrs. de la Mar, "that I have grown thin? I noticed in dressing to-day that I seemed not to fit my gown quite so well."

"I hope not," answered Mrs. de la Mar, kindly; "I don't wish your mother to think we have not treated you well."

She seemed very fragile and *spirituelle*, as she stood in the doorway, and the statesman felt a queer pang in the region of his heart. He longed for the time when he could care for her; perhaps, as she had hinted, domestic unhappiness might be responsible for her delicacy. She shook hands with him at parting, and he felt something in his palm; he examined it on the first opportunity, when he was unobserved. It was the little blue ring she always wore. He wondered at first if it had slipped off, then—he was not quite sure.

Edith Deming was very tactful as she led the way to the bower of roses, heavy with perfume and warm with dew. She pointed to some statues here and there amid the trees, and a flight of marble stairs leading to an arti-

ficial pond. Then she retailed the gossip of the house. The anxiety of her companion became less and less apparent as she grew more impersonal in her attitude.

But the inevitable silence came, for the night did not lend itself to the commonplace, and hide-bound as John Townsend was by conventionality, even he was forced to yield to the spell of the time and place.

On the other side of the hedge some young people were strolling home, and to the tinkling accompaniment of a mandolin, a high, clear voice, lustrous as the gems of which it sang, thrilled and troubled—

"The hours I spent with thee, dear heart,
Are as a string of pearls to me—"

Again the silence, while two souls, separated by the distance they had themselves created, crept gradually nearer and nearer.

Edith Deming soon reached the extreme of endurance, never a long journey, and turning swiftly toward her companion, asked, "Do you remember that evening we saw Modjeska in 'The Merchant of Venice'? Who was it took the part of *Jessica*?"

She recited in a low voice those magic lines, beginning:

"On such a night as this—"

"Oh, it must have been such a night as this. Dear, they forgot everything; cannot you? Let us be happy for this hour! It binds you to nothing, no morrow, no future."

Still he hesitated; yet the contagion of her mood enthralled him. There was a cloud in the sky sweeping swiftly toward the moon, to engulf it in the shadow. He watched this, entranced. His hour had come. The deep, full current of his passions, dammed by the strength of will, had broken through the barrier. Little by little the silver disk was obscured. Darkness enveloped them.

He caught her to him and hid his face in the fragrant laces of her gown.

VII

THERE was a strained atmosphere at Ilkley Villa; the tension was at the point of snapping. With one exception—this, of course, referring to Mr. de la Mar, who went into the city every morning and returned at night to eat his dinner and seclude himself with his books—the party were on the *qui vive*, waiting for something to happen, which was to crown or blast their hopes. This something was the statesman's decision.

John Townsend had been asked to stay after the week-end, and, following Mr. de la Mar's example, went in and out from the city to transact necessary business. The official notification of the statesman's appointment and its corresponding publicity were delayed, and the interregnum was taken advantage of by that astute personage to keep himself free a little longer from the tie of an ultimate word. He studied John Townsend these days as he had never before studied him in all the years they had worked together side by side. All his mistakes were recalled and their reasons tabulated; to offset these were the items of his faithfulness, his attention to detail, carried often to the point where the less important took precedence of the greater—the fault of department training, where a man's attention is kept so closely on the comma that he loses the sense of the matter it punctuates. His comprehensive knowledge of the statesman's affairs, his unflagging memory were remembered and appreciated, and his obvious limitations deplored; for this was a post which demanded that a man should have no limitations, but that his ability should become elastic at the pull of circumstance. Then there was the affair of Edith Deming, and the lips of the statesman tightened every time the fact of its existence obtruded. In the days near at hand, freighted with the burden of diplomatic niceties, he needed someone who was absolutely free; someone

without entanglements, above all, an entanglement with a woman like Edith Deming, who would admit no law but her own will, who could be depended on always to upset the most careful calculations by the impulse of the moment—her only mentor. He needed someone at his elbow, to sit in his pocket, as the phrase is, ready to go and come; someone who would have no bond that prevented obedience. He must have a man for his work whose mind was unclouded by passions, whose life was absorbed in the success of his undertaking, who knew no day or night, no outside obligation, no enervating pleasure and no regret. Departmental life does not recognize the existence of heart or soul; it is a juggernaut crushing and crashing along, and its victims are numbered chiefly among those who have stayed in its way, disbelieving until the last in its inhumanity.

Would John Townsend be willing to make all the sacrifices that would be demanded from him, supposing that he were chosen as the assistant on this foreign mission? How far was he entangled with this woman? Was she the active force binding him by the power of her uncontrolled affections to an intrigue for which he had little inclination? Was he the innocent victim of a woman's persistence—the secret of so many like alliances? Had he underneath the quiet exterior a resolute will? Had this human machine, for as such the statesman regarded him, the resisting power and the implacable strength of mechanism? Was he, not she, the controlling element? Had he concentrated in this single passion all the lesser emotions that usually prevent the one from over-powering?

In his own life, Claridge Robertson had made sacrifices at the time needed. He had cut himself free from the ordinary life and had studied only his career. The result demonstrated the verity of his convictions, and a man knows no road to success except that which he himself has trod.

He only asked of the man who was to stand by his side a like viewpoint. Celibacy, as he had said that day in the rose garden, he believed necessary for the young man until he had made his path; not alone the celibacy of the body, but the celibacy of the heart and soul as well.

Before he himself made his choice, he must know that this affair was stopped. If John Townsend refused, then he was out of the running, his career closed. The statesman would miss him; it would be difficult to train a successor. But he shook himself free from this suggestion; no man ever had been, ever could be, an absolute necessity to him—to admit that would be to admit a weakness, and he prided himself on having none, where his profession was concerned.

But what of the alternative choice, Kenneth Bigelow? He studied the *pros* and *cons* carefully. That he was young enough to be amenable and willing enough to offset experience with enthusiasm was obvious. That his connections and their influence were powerful was a count in his favor. His physical attractiveness was admitted also as a probable help, for the social side of life at the foreign post would be no inconsiderable feature, and while an attachment to one woman must be deplored, the fact that he might control many would be a count in his favor. The statesman had sought the woman too often, when perplexities arose, not to appreciate the weight of her favor or displeasure in affairs of state. The one thing he had not spoken of in regard to Bigelow, in his conversation with Mrs. de la Mar, was the reputation the youth had gained of being a *Don Juan*. This did not seriously weigh against him, except in so far as it related to Blanche Adrian. Kenneth's attentions in these last few days had been too marked to escape notice; he had the fault of the amateur—exaggeration—and, lacking the ingénue's experience, who met his favor with a deprecating look of surprise in public, he

showed to those watching—and everyone was watching at Ilkley Villa—the spectacle of a man who was either so calloused by many gallantries as not to care that he was criticized and that he was possibly compromising another, or so much in love as to be unable to weigh his words and deeds.

The statesman had not said the decisive word to the ingénue, but that it was merely delayed until a fitting opportunity was known as well to her as it was to Mrs. de la Mar, the only two who had knowledge of his intent; for, unlike Kenneth Bigelow, he had the power of masking his feelings, and treated the three women with the same courteous gallantry—Mrs. de la Mar, his first love; Blanche Adrian, the girl whom he had determined to make his wife, and Edith Deming, whom he disliked and feared.

That Kenneth's attentions to the ingénue were anything more than the idle gallantry that a young man is sure to pay to a beautiful girl with whom he is environed for a fortnight the statesman did not credit; but trained to admit possibilities and their consequences, it was the vague possibility with which he had to deal in this crucial decision. The rule of celibacy that he had laid down for John Townsend applied equally well to Kenneth Bigelow. He had no desire to rank as his confidential assistant a man who was in the raptures of a honeymoon, or one whose heart was torn by absence and uncertainty. Besides this, there was the delicate complication of opposing interests. If Kenneth were really in love with the ingénue—whom, he had reason to suppose, was to bear his own name—there would be continued unpleasantness. In the foreign city where, as his wife, she would have many social duties to perform, there would come times when she must have at her beck and call a man who could be trusted with her emotions, as well as with his own honor. The fact that he had determined to ask Blanche Adrian to be his wife should be sufficient cause, if Kenneth Bige-

low placed his career above everything else, as he had been led to suppose, why the young man should instantly withdraw even the preliminary attentions that he had of late been showering on the ingénue. True, he did not as yet know the statesman's views; knowing them, would he antagonize them, or yield his place and withdraw into the background before matters reached a point where he could not retreat with honor?

There was an immediate sacrifice to be demanded of Kenneth Bigelow, as of John Townsend, before even the ground could be cleared for a final choice. That the sacrifice of the former ranked that of the latter did not occur to Claridge Robertson; to him they bore the relation that an affair of gallantry does to that of *la grande passion*. He had recently had a conversation with Mrs. de la Mar on this subject. She had taken the bull by the horns, and had deplored what she termed Kenneth's infatuation for her guest.

"It is, of course," she had averred, "mere flirtation on his part, and, to give her credit, I must say that she does not encourage him. It will not weigh against him?" She had concentrated all the pathos of dread in her voice.

The statesman did not answer at once.

"As I told you in the beginning, but one thing can weigh in my choice—the fitness of the applicant; but that fitness may touch many characteristics. To antagonize one's chief is not the usual path to political preferment."

"But he does not know," Mrs. de la Mar had pleaded.

"But he will, and then—" The statesman had shrugged his shoulders, and his meaning was obvious.

"The Bigelows were always obstinate—it is on their father's side."

"Of course," the statesman smiled assent.

"They have always been self-willed; see how Kenneth's father has persistently antagonized me in regard to this matter; and his mother—well, you

know that Martha has gelatine vertebrae."

"Listen! This is not a personal matter, although it would be hard to make a woman understand that. I never have changed, I never shall change, my belief; but you will understand the absurdity of having a man with me who is in love with my wife. You might say that this is personal prejudice, but you are too clever not to admit that no circumstance is isolated; one must always affect another, and who could tell the bearing such a state of affairs would have, must have, even on the political questions I am called on to settle?"

She would not admit or deny.

"Supposing the impossible should happen—that they really fall in love; that you are mistaken in regard to her feeling for you—supposing, as the children say, that she prefers him to you, what then?"

"I made the stipulation before this came into the question that celibacy, at least for a reasonable term of years, must be one of the qualifications of any young man whom I choose to—stand by me at present. This may appear harsh, but I must adhere to my decision."

"Why should you arrogate to yourself superiority to the law of nature?"

"I do not. You wilfully misunderstand me. Why cannot you look at this from a broader standpoint? The man who, at the parting of the ways, chooses the domestic path, with its calm happiness and the routine of a business career, which offers no unexpected questions and demands no sacrifices, does wisely. I approve. Had I my life to live over again, I should show my approval by my deed. But there are some professions that demand a man's all; he cannot serve two masters. Many a life has been hampered, even destroyed, by attempting to do this. You will understand soon why I am so rigid in this matter, and you must believe me when I say that there is no rivalry between Kenneth and myself sufficient to bias my judgment. My hesitation in taking his future on

my shoulders is founded on impartial grounds. He has his fighting chance! We shall see; we shall see."

Mrs. de la Mar did not dare tell Kenneth of the statesman's intentions in regard to the ingénue, for fear of crystallizing what might be an indecision into a dread fact.

One morning's post ended uncertainty. The papers were filled with the news. It was announced that the Honorable Claridge Robertson was to be given a certain mission, whose complications and possibilities had been the meat of editorial paragraphs for months. Half-tones of the famous statesman were given great prominence; he was displayed reading, writing, in his well-known attitude of address, dictating to his secretary, receiving constituents. The details of his career were given a prominence usually allotted only to a favorite tooth-wash or shaving soap.

The ingénue, with sparkling eyes and a voice whose tone contradicted her irony, announced that any pleasure a man might feel at such an honor must be counteracted by seeing the pictures of himself in unscrupulous journals, which turned an aquiline nose into a Roman without a twinge of remorse, and made a bachelor with irreproachable antecedents look like a convict waiting for his stripes.

There was a personal letter which the statesman read aloud. It congratulated him in warm terms, and stated that his appointment was to be sent in a day or so. It also suggested that he hold himself in readiness to come to the department at once.

The buzz about the breakfast-table was deafening for a moment; it was the buzz that tries to hide something deeper, the surprise that demands silence and does not wish to disclose its desire.

Mrs. de la Mar and Kenneth Bigelow understood for the first time why the statesman had hesitated and shown such an unwillingness to direct the latter's future. Whatever man he chose to stand with him must be in-

deed capable. For the first time since the night when he had held the ingénue in his arms Kenneth felt a return of his old ambition, and realized that there was something in the world besides a woman's eyes. What a chance for a young man! Never would there, never could there, be such another.

He pictured himself, with the ingénue at his side, in the excitements of that foreign life, so deliciously near. How they would enjoy it together! What a glory to be able to offer her this! A subordinate position, it is true, but he was young and it was the first step.

Mrs. de la Mar could not hide her anxiety, but it passed unnoticed amid that of the other occupants of the table.

John Townsend's lips were tightly pressed. In a few hours, now, he would know his fate. He measured his antagonist with his cold glance, as he had measured him many times lately, noted all the striking points of personality, the charm of his manner, his perfect self-possession, the look of radiant hope and of well-being. The youth was well equipped; he could blame no man for choosing such a one instead of his unattractive self; all that could speak for him was his past, and he hoped that it had been sufficient to make amends for much that he lacked. While his eyes traveled stealthily over the face of Kenneth Bigelow, Edith Deming's were on his face. Since that night in the rose garden they had avoided tête-à-têtes. This was not a situation to be longer tampered with; there could be no more half measures. He must do as she desired or leave her forever, and she felt triumphantly that he could not do that now.

The ingénue was lost in dreams. She had never believed that such an honor might be hers if she so willed. She pictured herself a centre of social life in a foreign capital, a mistress of intrigue. She felt a pleasurable sense of destiny encompassing her; then she met Kenneth Bigelow's eyes, and her own gave him an encouraging smile.

The statesman rose and addressed

his hostess. "May I have the use of the library for a couple of hours?" And, receiving her consent, he turned to his secretary. "I shall expect you in half an hour. There is something of special importance."

Then he turned to Kenneth. "Will you follow Mr. Townsend? I will detain you but a moment; there are certain things—" his voice became inaudible as he turned away.

The party left the table after his withdrawal, each one wishing to be alone.

In half an hour to the minute, John Townsend knocked at the library door. The statesman was sitting at a desk, finishing a letter. He sealed, stamped and directed it, then turned to the man standing respectfully at his side, in whose attitude was a new awe. Inured to official distinctions, he gauged each man's position by his manner.

"Sit down."

John Townsend obeyed.

The statesman plunged into the midst of things. "You know that I shall have to take with me into this affair a man whom I can trust implicitly. He must have certain qualities." He detailed these, and to each John Townsend bowed assent as a marionette obeys its hidden string. "The choice lies between you and Bigelow. The question of the fitness of each has been in my mind for a long time. I have not yet decided. I shall not—" he looked at his opened watch—"for one hour."

Townsend started. The statesman, apparently unconscious of his emotion, repeated: "In one hour I shall make my selection. That choice may be made easy for me by the voluntary withdrawal of one of the applicants."

The gaze of the secretary was fixed on the rug.

"The man I take must be free—absolutely free; free not only from legal but from other ties. I refer, of course, to his life as it relates to the other sex. I can have no man who is hampered by the exactions of an *affaire de cœur*, as I refuse to take with me any man who is on the verge of matrimony; he

must not even count the hours between the mail steamers."

John Townsend opened his lips to say something, but the statesman interrupted.

"Don't speak yet! I am not quite just to you, perhaps, in dealing in generalities when the matter is one of so great importance. I have heard—I know, in fact, of Mrs. Deming's infatuation for you. I am cognizant of the fact that she came here—to help your interests as she has helped them many times before. I deplore this greatly, and I say to you frankly that, unless you can tear yourself away from this affair absolutely, I cannot even consider you as a candidate for the position you desire. There is no room for argument; you know me and you know I am right in this. You must make your choice and abide by it."

Again Townsend attempted to speak, and again the statesman prevented him. "Come to me in an hour and say that you are free, and then we shall see, we shall see! You understand, perhaps better than any man except myself, the importance of this post. If I seem harsh you must think of that. It is seldom such an opportunity comes to so young a man. He should not consider for a moment the possibility of a questionable relation standing in his way. If I should die—yes, I know, but there is the contingency—my work would have to be carried on, and only one man could do that—the man I take with me. Think this over, and come to me at the end of the time specified."

A few minutes later Kenneth Bigelow entered the room and sat down without hesitation, looking the statesman frankly in the face. The tiny network of veins under his eyes was very blue, otherwise he seemed perfectly calm.

"You have decided as to my fitness or unfitness?" he asked, with dignity. "I see now why you hesitated. It is a great thing." The color flamed into his cheeks. He was thinking even then of the ingénue.

The statesman glanced at him critic-

ally. "There is something I wish to say to you, Kenneth, before I touch on the subject of your possible appointment. It is a personal matter; it has to do with myself and—and Blanche Adrian. I am going to ask her to marry me. I may say, perhaps, without egotism, that I do not anticipate a refusal."

"Miss Adrian? Blanche?"

"Yes." The statesman smiled indulgently. "Your tone makes it impossible to ignore your feeling. I must, therefore, say to you this: that in case Miss Adrian accepts my offer, it will be impossible for me to take on this mission, exposed constantly to the fascination of her presence, any man who is really in love with her. A flirtation is one thing, not to be treated seriously, for it has no element of seriousness in it; it is easily forgotten; the remedy, a new face. This leads me to a discussion of the position in question. There is a condition attached to it: the man whom I choose must be a bachelor; I can take no one with me who has domestic ties. Those may come in time, when he is forty, perhaps; by that time he is made or marred. You understand all that is implied in these two statements and requirements?"

"Perfectly—but—"

"No," and the statesman again timed his interruption with skill; "do not answer me now. I shall be here in an hour's time. If you can say to me then that you are free and that your only interest is to serve your country, I shall soon let you know whether in return for your loyalty I can give you your opportunity. Think it over." He put his hands on the young man's shoulders and looked him full in the eyes. He thought then, as he had thought the first day of meeting, that, if he ever had a son, he would like him to grow into such a man as Kenneth Bigelow.

VIII

JOHN TOWNSEND went out of the library with head bent. He was given his chance. He could not complain,

and yet, since the night in the garden of roses, life had taken on a new meaning. But the old habits, the old ambitions were strong and fought for place with the vigor of tigers. Absolute renunciation of the woman he loved was the price demanded for his future. It is true that he was bound to her by no tie, except that created by his own honor. He had taken her into his soul. In those ecstatic moments in the garden they had touched the flame of life together; it remained for him to thrust her into the cold of the outer world. Could he do it? She had said to him over and over again that those moments were as if they had never been. She had given generously. Her very abnegation of self was more potent than the most exacting demand would have been.

He appreciated the situation fully from the point of view of his chief. An affair like this would bring scandal on his administration. Even supposing the husband granted her a divorce, still the prestige of the people concerned meant the usual nine days' abuse; he would enter his new office under a cloud. Or, if matters remained as they were, assuming that he followed the way of his world, the result would be still more disastrous. He would be tied to a nervous, high-strung woman, jealous, exacting, unbridled as to her emotions, and the prey to every fleeting impulse. He did not blame Claridge Robertson for the stand he had taken. It was just, and no one more than he could appreciate this quality. He was to give her up entirely—that was the condition; not with diplomatic, time-serving excuses, a gradual withdrawal from day to day, a letter instead of a promised meeting, one delay and then another, little by little the weakening of the knots until the final break was made easy. This was not to be. She was to be cut out of his life within an hour, now, at once, as a limb is lopped from a tree. When the minute-hand of the clock should have traveled its circled round, he must go back to his chief a free man, ready to take up the new and absorbing duties,

for which he had prepared himself by years of faithful service.

What should he do? Decisions had been made easy for him before, for precedents were always at hand in his departmental life, to tell not only how to act but what to think. His training offered no clue in this situation; its mystery appalled him. That he of all men should find himself in such a chaos of conflicting desires, he who had never swerved before from the straight, unhilocked road of governmental duties, who had seen before him at the birth of each day a path similar to the one he had trod the day before!

As Claridge Robertson had conjectured, John Townsend was consumed by a passion more destructive because more concentrated than that which is modified by other sentiments in the average man. But as sand is thrown on a flame to extinguish it, so, grain by grain, he threw on this glow the thoughts of ambition, hope, the dreams that had been his since childhood.

Naturally he turned his steps to the rose garden. She was awaiting him there. She was pale and agitated. About her in the path were broken stems and strewn leaves which she had picked and thrown from her to still the inward tumult by some outward manifestation. They faced each other. His countenance, always impassive, his gestures and walk, machine-like, offered her no clue.

"Well, he has chosen. It is you, or—don't tell me that pink-cheeked youth has defeated you."

"It is not decided."

"Not decided? What do you mean? I thought he said——"

"He is to decide in one hour."

"Why should he wait? Doesn't he know his own mind?"

"He cannot decide until certain things have happened." He turned his face away from her.

"You mean—?" she came nearer and placed her hand on his.

"I am to come to him in an hour's time—free, else I am out of the running."

"Free?" Her lips were white. He thought she was going to faint, and put out his hand to steady her.

She shook herself from it. "Free? You mean free from me?"

He nodded. But he was merciful and did not look at her.

There was silence for a long time. In the walled inclosure they were as much alone as if this were another Eden and they its only occupants, conscious for the first time of the presence of an unseen evil. Her eyes wandered restlessly about. Here and there she noted withered roses—the flowers of yesterday. There was a dry, lustreless effect on the vegetation; not a breeze stirred. The coming heat of midday threatened them with its resistless enervation.

What could she say? Nothing. She had said all that memorable night; anything more would be superogatory. For once her impulsive, ready speech, tactless, unmeaning often, was dried up. She could only wait. She looked at him, but the look gained nothing. He was gazing far away, his eyes hiding with their opaqueness all inner meanings, as a pane of ground glass refuses the penetration of the curious.

Their thoughts followed parallel lines. Over and over again they traversed the events of their acquaintance, friendship, love. They had met conventionally, and the continuance of their relation had been due to her persistence. It was long before he noted her interest, longer before he responded by even a thought; then she had seen the opportunity to help him, and it was through her secret efforts that he had been promoted to a place from which the step to the secretaryship, his present position, was accomplished.

Her marriage had never had an excuse, unless the will of others be one. Tied to a man who loathed her as she loathed him, propinquity making them fiercely antagonistic, there had been no hour when she had not chafed at her chains, and scarcely a day when she had not implored her husband to free them both from their mistakes. Her

first requests had been met with contemptuous rebuffs; lately he had maintained a stolid indifference, but, unknown to her, since her absence this time, he had wakened suddenly to the advantage of a home freed from the turbulence of her moods, her recriminations, insolences and retaliations. He had all at once come to the conclusion that even the publicity of a divorce was preferable to the unending unpleasantness of a marriage like theirs.

She had been free, comparatively, for he had been too indifferent to care about her coming and going, except so far as he could irritate her by interference. The oases of his life had been found in her absences, and it was not surprising that he should desire a prolonged separation.

But of this the lovers were ignorant, and the letter announcing the husband's desire would not reach the wife until too late to affect their decision. She would have chosen this, had she known; for, like every woman, she wished to be loved in spite of difficulties, the more, perhaps, on their account. Supposing John Townsend should prefer her and love to his dream without her, they would have to give up much: she, luxury, ever the woman's temptation; he, ambition, the man's price. Was it worth the sacrifice?

The minute-hand crept nearer and nearer to the fatal point.

Kenneth Bigelow ran into the arms of Mrs. de la Mar as he came out of the library.

"What is it, Kenneth?" she asked, anxiously. "I was so nervous I simply could not wait, and have been walking up and down here like a caged beast."

There was an ecstatic look on his face that no one could mistake.

"You have it? I am so glad, so glad! You can never know how I have hoped and prayed."

A shadow crossed the man's face. "I am sorry," he stammered, awkwardly. He had forgotten everything but the young girl, waiting somewhere, whom

he was seeking in his thought, his body detained against his will.

"You don't mean you haven't it? Why did you look so happy? What is it? Tell me—there is something. I don't understand, and I can't endure the suspense."

"I have lost it!" He spoke with decision. "Absolutely. But it's my own choice. He gave me my chance—my fighting chance. You mustn't blame him."

"You have lost it—why? You have withdrawn in favor of that—that automaton—that—"

"Hush, auntie, dear; that wasn't it."

"What then?" Her forgotten fear took possession of her. "You don't mean it is on account of her—you have really been in earnest; you didn't see, didn't know, you were ruining your chances?"

"It is for her—for Blanche." There was no consciousness of a sacrifice. He had gained his world; what mattered a paltry ambition?

"Kenneth, think what you are doing—think of the life you are condemning yourself to; think, if you love me at all, of my disappointment; it has been my wish for years. I can't let you give it up—I can't."

"I am sorry," he stammered again. His mood did not lend itself to originality of expression. He realized all at once what she was suffering—and suffering so that he could not help her.

"Has she promised—have you spoken to her?" Hope died hard.

He remembered his promise to the ingénue, and did not answer.

"She has?"

"I am going to her now." He tried to put his arms about her in the old boyish way, but she repulsed him.

"No, Kenneth." Her lips were hardened into a thin, straight line. "I suppose I shall forgive you some day, for I love you and am a woman, but it will take a long time. I am sick and hurt." She turned and left him standing perplexed.

He found the ingénue at the desk

in the big hall, tearing up a slip of paper on which she had been scribbling. She arose and came forward.

He put his arms about her and turned her beautiful face to his. "Dear, I hope you will not be too disappointed. I am not to go with Mr. Robertson. He has chosen someone better fitted."

"You mean John Townsend?"

"I presume so. You see, he has experience and other things. It is a wise choice, and Mr. Robertson has acted well. You do not care—much?"

The ingénue did not answer for a moment; then: "What will you do?"

"Oh, I shall go into the firm—I don't mind now, not a bit," and there was no hesitation in his voice. "There will always be the evenings, Sundays and holidays, and sometimes you will walk down to the office for me. When you do that and I know you are coming I can get through the day all right. You are not disappointed? Tell me, dear."

"No, but—"

"But what?"

"I don't understand! Why is Townsend better fitted than you? You have more brains in your little finger than he has in his whole body; you are a man, and he is a thing; you are influential and well connected, and he is a nobody."

"But there are many things governing political choice; it is not always the man who seems to be the best fitted who is really so."

"Kenneth, you are hiding something from me. Tell me at once."

"Mr. Robertson wants an unmarried man."

"Is that all?"

"Isn't that enough? How shrewd you are!—I never suspected it. Well, he doesn't want anybody who is in love with you. He imagines—a good joke, isn't it?—that if he asks you, you will marry him. Think of it! What an outrage—a man old enough to be your father!"

"It is a great position."

"Very great, dear; but I know that

would not weigh with you any more than it would with me."

They sat quietly side by side; then Kenneth said: "Isn't it a great thing—a wonderful thing?"

"What?"

"This, dear," and he kissed her. "For years I have thought only of my career, worked to that end, partly because my aunt wished it, partly because I desired, above all else, to get away from the business life. Now I don't care. I am going to take up that life without a single regret. I can hate nothing any longer, not even uncongenial work."

"And you are doing this for me?"

There was an awe-struck tone in her voice, which Kenneth remembered afterward.

"Don't imply there is any giving up. I would lay down my life gladly for you, and it would be no sacrifice." He withdrew himself from her for a moment to regain his self-control, and laid his blond head on the cushions, face down, his favorite attitude of thought.

There was a soft touch of lips at the back of his neck, and when he looked up the ingénue had stolen away.

Alone in her room, she re-opened the note received but a half-hour since from the Honorable Claridge Robertson. "Would she answer him soon? There were certain reasons which she might guess that made this unseemly haste pardonable." She could read between the lines that she had dallied too long. She knew that the moment had come. He was not a man to be trifled with. Having given her all this time to reflect, having shown his intentions by various ways, it only remained for him to disclose the iron hand concealed by the velvet glove. He was patient—within limits. He wanted her consent, and he wanted it at once. That was the gist of the note, beneath flattering phrases. He was waiting in the library. Would she come there, or send him word?

Her lips were still warm with the kisses of her lover. She had been touched to the depths of her calculat-

ing soul by the greatness of his affection and the generosity of his attitude. She had had laid at her feet the one gift which few women ever receive—a selfless love, willing to sacrifice itself, and she appreciated it as only the woman can who has known but the other kind, which thinks only and always of itself.

Love! What was it that Mrs. Deming had told her—that only in love would she find relief from the burden of life; that she would gain everything by yielding to it; that she would lose everything by denying it? She knew that Mrs. Deming spoke the truth; she had seen how, in another, renunciation could bring supreme joy. Was she strong enough to follow that example—give all and receive all? She had jested the day she talked to her mother; in her heart had always been the determination to make *le grand mariage*; she had seen in this visit her opportunity, and she had taken her chance, conscious of her power over men and never doubting her success. She had thought of Kenneth Bigelow with curiosity, prompted by the many stories she had heard of his beauty, his gallantry and his charm; but she had judged him as a possible means to an end—that was all; a rival, perhaps, to stir inertia into action, a folly for a Midsummer mood. That she would really fall in love with him she had never dreamed, for she had never supposed it possible that she could fall in love with anyone.

And this was love! this power that made her hesitate, doubt and question, that made her turn away from the chosen path at the moment when it opened into the promised land—this fascination that even in memory thrilled her, and made her throb in an agony of delight. She pictured an existence with Kenneth—they two in a world by themselves—its happiness only tempered by the obligations of life, its returns sweet enough to repay its separations. Then she deliberately turned her mind from this idyllic picture to another. Wealth,

prestige, opportunity were to be had for the asking. Never was there a woman who could not be tempted by them; never was there one more susceptible to their power. Day-dreams enthralled her. She saw the gay life of a foreign court, where she would be a conspicuous figure; she outlined adventures of gallantry; she saw herself the envied of women and the adored of men; she held the reins of power in her hand; she was fêted and flattered—a queen among revels. She could have this or the commonplace life of a provincial town, with its humdrum parties, its occasional outings, its growing-old, side-tracked from the main road and never knowing the best; day after day the same routine, the same people, the same gowns, the same thoughts, love itself wearied by ceaseless repetitions.

Again the vision of the man below, with his pure, grave face, his loving eyes, his unselfishness; and the thought of the look that might come into that countenance to cloud its youth and joy when he learned that she had been untrue. The agony of doubt held her in its grip.

Minute after minute passed; finally she went to the window, where a writing-table had been placed. She wrote a few lines, hurriedly, inclosed them, and sealed the envelope with her special device, a lily impaled on the point of a sword. She rang the bell, and gave the maid her note to deliver to the occupant of the library.

While she was fighting her battle, Kenneth Bigelow remained in a recumbent position, with his arms thrown over his head, thinking the long, long thoughts of youth. Never for a moment did he doubt her faith any more than he doubted his own. All his life heretofore seemed to him but a preparation for this. How hard he would work for her—that routine work he had once hated, which now seemed but a flower-strewn path leading to a field of many delights. He would please others, too—his father and mother, who had always resented

his aunt's influence and his own predilections, who had suffered at his withdrawals and his outside interests. He could see his gentle mother take his wife to her arms, and his stern father, who had vouchsafed him but once or twice in his life the hand-clasp of approval, greeting him as a prodigal son returning from a far country.

He was sorry for Townsend. He would get what he wanted; but, after all, it was so little. He would never know that he had missed the supreme thing.

The moments flew along. The time approached when he must make his second visit to the statesman and announce his decision.

IX

THE statesman was sitting in the same position when John Townsend knocked. He was reading a tiny, perfumed note, and when his secretary entered he laid it down and placed a paper-weight over it, as if, like a butterfly, it might take to itself wings and float away.

"Well?"

The young man had approached respectfully, and awaited his chief's permission before he opened his lips. "I—am—free, sir, at your commands."

That was all, only the tense lines of his face and its chalky pallor were witnesses of the inner struggle.

Claridge Robertson said nothing; his expression did not change; it was the expected that had happened.

"It would be well for you to go into the city at once; there is a train that leaves in an hour. I shall be there myself to-morrow or the next day. I am simply waiting the official news of my appointment. I shall tell you then all my plans—and my decision."

The secretary bowed. There were a few other matters discussed, and the interview, apparently so commonplace, but freighted with its burden of human suffering, was over.

As the secretary reached the door the statesman recalled him. "If you

do not care to see anyone, I will make your excuses."

Again the secretary bowed his appreciation and left the room. Perhaps nothing in his career had ever shown the forces that had shaped it better than these few minutes, when he had given so much, yet did not even know if his sacrifice were to be crowned with the laurels of victory. He strode by the rose garden and did not turn his head. Was she there? Then he thrust her from his thought and continued on his way, trusting to chance to find a vehicle that would carry him into the village.

In the garden Edith Deming sat waiting. Whatever happened, he would at least come to her and tell her his decision. Even if the worst came, there would be the relief of a farewell—the last. It would be something to remember in the long days to come, in the sleepless nights, in the quarrels and trials of her domestic life. She would, if this happened, tear him out of her heart with all the force of a passionate woman's will, but at least she would accord him this minute—before their roads diverged. She would show him and later the world that she was not the weakling they thought her. She would never again waste thought or word on his memory, but she must prepare for that future by the remembrance of hurts she could inflict on him in the moment of his triumph. So her thoughts wandered.

A servant approached with a letter for her, which had come by the second post. It was in her husband's handwriting. She fingered it nervously, then stopped the servant's retreat.

"Mr. Townsend is in the library with Mr. Robertson; tell him when he comes out that I am here and would like to see him for a moment."

Her voice was husky and her manner that of a caged lioness, but the servant was well trained. How she hated herself for the message! but she must see him, she must see him! She almost screamed in her agitation. If he had been true to her, all would be well; he would forgive her lack of control as he

had so often forgiven it before; if not, then he at least owed it to her to be the first to tell her of her loss.

She tore the letter open. There were eight closely written sheets, in the fine, copperplate handwriting, every letter exact, every space carefully noted, which she hated as she hated everything else relating to the man whose name she bore. It detailed in terms of disgust every event of their unhappy existence from the wedding day to the present time. It was filled with accusations, innuendos, covert suggestions of wrong-doing and unalterable dislike. It ended by stating that the only happiness the writer had ever known had been found in her absences, and that, moved by a desire for a continuance of peace, he was in communication with his lawyers as to the least public and surest method of divorce.

She read it through twice, then gazed blankly at the vine-covered wall. If it had come earlier! Had its delay ruined her life? She twisted it in her fingers. She was glad it had not come sooner. She was willing to abide by her lover's decision; how much happier they would both be to know that it had not been influenced by this!

There were quick steps approaching. It was he. Her heart beat at twice its normal speed.

It was only the servant she had sent. "Mr. Townsend has gone."

"Gone!" She screamed the word. "You don't mean gone!"

The servant turned his eyes away, ostensibly to brush a caterpillar from his sleeve. "Mr. Robertson told me, ma'am; he said as how he'd got to catch the next train and wouldn't be back again."

She waited until the sound of the man's feet announced a safe distance, then threw herself on the sward amid the roses, and beat the ground with her clenched fists. How long she lay there she did not know—minutes, days, months, years, an eternity. She lived them all, and found them all alike futile and bare.

The time had come. Kenneth

aroused himself from his dreams of future happiness at the announcement that the statesman awaited him. Only an hour had elapsed, but an hour sometimes mocks the belief that we can divide time into a block system of regularity. Only an hour—it seemed to Kenneth that it was at least a year since he had stood there before. It was a time that had made a man of him, stripped him of all his uncertainties, placed him *vis-à-vis* with truth. He was tall, serene, magnificent in his disdain.

"It was not necessary that you should have sent me away," he said, simply. "I knew my own mind, then. I have never had a moment's hesitation; but you exacted obedience, and I was glad to accord it."

The statesman looked at him curiously. He had known many men, young, middle-aged, old. He had studied them as the man studies humanity who believes that everyone has a price, and who is desirous of finding out the amount in the quickest possible time. He knew that no price would avail here; that honor and loyalty were planted so firmly that nothing would tear them up; that nothing ever could. Claridge Robertson had commenced life with an ideal of what a man should be. He had had neither the inclination nor strength to personify that ideal in himself, and he had never found it in another until the day when Kenneth Bigelow looked him in the eyes. He had studied him closely; he had found an instinct for, and an unflinching love of, the truth, a shrinking from evil in its various forms, a passion of disdain and resentment for everything that is mean, trivial and petty. Kenneth had the soul that, by the law of averages, one should find in a deformed body; that it should have been placed in one whose physical beauty was so great, argued that nature had attempted to show what men could be rather than what they are, to shame others by the intrusion among them of one who put to blush the creed that morality and attraction are incompatible companions.

The statesman well knew that he could not force this man's hand as he had that of his secretary. He shrank from hearing his decision.

Kenneth did not wait for any question. "I am in love with Miss Adrian. I have been—well, I suppose, counting by days, it is not long, but it seems to me that I have loved her all my life—I could not give her up. There is nothing that would weigh for a minute—nothing."

"You have spoken to her?"

Kenneth was bound by his promise. "I wish her for my wife. I shall leave no stone unturned to gain her. You must see that it is impossible to think for a moment of a compromise."

"Kenneth—" the statesman's voice shook with feeling—"don't decide now. I want you with me. I can trust you as I have never trusted another man. I feel this, know it. I am growing old. I need a son. Tear this out of your heart—you can if you will—and come with me. I will take you if you say the word, despite the delicate position in which that decision will place you—and us."

"Us? What do you mean?"

Kenneth had taken a step nearer, and the blue veins under his eyes seemed to leap into prominence.

The statesman turned and drew a note from beneath the paper-weight. "Miss Adrian has just promised to be my wife." He handed the note to the young man, who brushed it aside with a passionate gesture.

"She is going to marry you! She is going to marry you!" The words came from a stricken heart; but after that exclamation he was silent.

In a minute he walked to the window and stood motionless, looking out on the stretch of velvet lawn to the sunlight dancing on the waters of the lake, to all the beauty and repose of the Summer scene. He felt strange; the physical sickness outweighed the mental. So this was the way people felt before they fainted; he had often wondered. Everything whirled in this way and grew black. But why did the floor slip away?—where was it?—how

foolish of him, of course there was ground there! But why was the lake so angry all at once? If he could only feel something in his hand, something to cling to! He put it out blindly, and the next he knew he was on the floor with the statesman bending over him, pouring water down his lips and on his head.

"It is nothing," he said, as he slowly recovered. "I have frightened you—don't tell her, will you?"

The statesman shook his head.

Kenneth staggered to his feet. "I am all right now, right as can be. I guess I have been spoiled, to let a little thing like that knock me out. It isn't a very good capital to commence life with, is it?" He reached the door.

The statesman put his hands on the boy's shoulders and spun him round. "Kenneth, I know now that what I suggested is impossible; but you will forgive me—you have no hard feelings?"

"Forgive you?" There was sincerity in his voice and eyes. "I have nothing to forgive. You have always treated me well, better than I expected; you gave me my chance, and you could not help loving her. Who could?" He gripped the older man's hands. "Good-bye. I am going off immediately. I could not stay; it would be too much. But you will tell her, will you, that I wish her all the happiness in the world?" They stood a minute with hands clasped. Then he continued, solemnly: "You will be good to her, will you not? She is so young and sweet and dear, and perhaps does not always think. I imagine girls are like that; they don't feel so deeply themselves, and they don't realize all a man suffers. You will promise me that, will you?"

"I promise."

The door closed between them.

Kenneth caught at the railing once or twice going up-stairs; he still felt sick and faint, and he could not think very clearly. If he could see his aunt for a minute, put his head on her shoulder and have her smooth his forehead, as she had done so often when he was ill

or tired or unhappy! He knocked at the door. There was a silence of a minute or two, then her voice:

"Who is it?"

"It is I—Kenneth."

The tones were unlike those he was accustomed to.

"I am sorry, Kenneth, but I cannot see you now; I don't wish to."

"But I am going away; can I not say good-bye?"

"Good-bye. Perhaps it is better so. I shall try to forgive you."

Still the door remained obstinately closed, and he staggered to his room and threw himself on the bed.

And this was life—the life from which he had been guarded until now! The life men knew, not of romance, but of reality, the life where ambition beckoned and then denied; where those bound to one by the tie of kinship turned away when one crossed their will; where love mocked, friendship sneered, and only the dry husks remained! And he was so young, and there was nothing beyond but long days of disappointment and endless work leading nowhere. He was bereft of all. He closed his eyes tiredly. If he could only sleep—but it was impossible; over and over again, with the celerity of thought that visits the mind of the drowning, he, drowning in the vortex of his first great grief, a thousand times went over every scene in which he had loved and dreamed, unconscious of the fate that was binding him in the coils of disappointment, from which there was no escape.

The ingénue had written that she would come to the library in a little while, and when she heard Kenneth pass her door and knew there was no danger of a meeting, she stole down-stairs. She knocked timidly, and entered with eyes downcast. She was in her favorite white, with a rosebud in her golden hair and another in her hand. The soft ruffles of her gown trailed about her; her spotless slippers stole in and out. She looked so fresh and dainty that it was with difficulty that Claridge Rob-

ertson refrained from clasping her in his arms; but he did not wish to frighten her, and contented himself with taking her hand and touching it lightly with his lips, as he might that of a young princess who had deigned to honor him.

Of course Kenneth was in love with her; as he himself had said, how could any man help it? But he was young and would get over it. The griefs of youth are deep, but their depth is equaled by their transitoriness. So mused the statesman, feeling that he had been lonely in his greatness, and would be still more so if the beautiful dream should fade. He would be like one who has gained a glimpse of heaven, and then quick-shut gates hide it forever from sight. Yes, Kenneth would get over it; there was no call for him to sacrifice himself, as he had thought, in one wild moment, when he had seen the young man prone before him. Kenneth would recover. There were years of youth before him that would be filled with women, from whom he could make his choice, while this was his own last chance of happiness. He must hold it firmly. He glanced at her. She was sitting, smiling, radiant and expectant.

"You have been kind to me," he ventured, at length; "kinder than I deserved."

"It is I," she murmured, "who have been honored. I feel so awkward and incompetent to be your wife. You will have to teach me."

He drew his chair a little nearer. "It will be the pleasantest lesson in my life. I am afraid I shall forget more weighty matters while I watch your progress."

She moved away a little timidly at his next and bolder advance, and, in order not to frighten her, he changed the conversation.

"Our marriage—" he pretended not to see the flush on her cheeks—"will have to be at once. I am sorry, for I know you women like a long time for preparation. But I must depart soon after my appointment, and I want you to go with me."

Go with him! She rather thought she would. Did he think for a moment that she would be left behind?

They discussed the details, and she realized all the importance and greatness of the station to which she was called. She would see photographs of herself in all the papers, and accounts of her life; she would have to endure a great deal of attention, as soon as the marriage-to-be was announced. She was no longer Blanche Adrian, a nobody, just a pretty girl trying to establish herself in life most advantageously; she was the fiancée of one of the greatest statesmen of the age, and hereafter even her most ordinary toilette, her goings-out and comings-in, her inconsequential acts and her trivial habits, the books she read, the people she visited, the this, that and the other would be public property, and receive the attention of a press fevered with the desire for personality.

Their conversation lasted until the chiming of a clock roused them to the necessity of bringing it to a close. She rose and asked, with an adorable glance: "Shall I write to mamma and tell Mrs. de la Mar?"

"I shall write at once," he answered, "and I shall announce my happiness to the people here to-day. I have already told Kenneth."

He was watching her closely, but she showed no agitation.

"Was he surprised?" she asked, lightly.

He did not answer the question directly. "He desired me to tell you that he wished you every happiness in the world."

With the message of her lover on his lips, he caught her to him and kissed her passionately.

She was pale, and writhed herself free. There were tears in her eyes. "How could you?"

"Forgive me, my darling," he said, gently. "I should have been more careful. But you must remember I have certain privileges now."

She did not answer. He heard her fleet feet running up the stairs

as if she were pursued, and turning smilingly to his desk he took in his hand the note she had written him, gazed at it for a moment, lifted it to his lips, and finally placed it in the inner pocket of his coat.

X

No one ate luncheon that day in the dining-room at Ilkley Villa. Mrs. de la Mar sent a word of excuse to her guests; she had a headache and could not leave her room. The statesman was busy in the library, and asked that a tray might be sent him there. Mrs. Deming and Kenneth took no note of time and were ignorant of the passing of the hours, the ringing of the bell and the call for the midday repast. The ingénue stole down the back stairs, secured some cake, a plate with an airy creation that looked like a miniature Eiffel Tower of whipped cream and almonds, and went back to her room.

Late in the afternoon despatches commenced to arrive for the Honorable Claridge Robertson. These despatches related to his appointment. To one inured to the workings of departments, they should not have occasioned more than the first outburst of surprise; that they did more than this simply showed that a clever man had been wrong in his calculations and had permitted himself to hope—when the first lesson of government service is to learn that he who enters there leaves hope behind. Something had gone wrong, a sudden unforeseen influence had been brought to bear, a foreign intricacy had arisen, or a home power had touched a hidden wire. Briefly, the press notices, the rumors of the appointment, the personal and semi-official letters were founded on a mistake, and were already past history. In newspaper offices men were looking up the record of the man billeted to the post—this time surely. That he was little known was im-

material. It was hinted by the editorials that he was for some mysterious reason safer, for in lieu of facts something must be given the imagination to feed upon. Later, the statesman would receive letters explaining, offering sympathy, hedging against blame; he had written such letters himself and knew what they meant. Until the document bearing his appointment and signed officially is delivered into his hands, the man in the service, no matter what his rank, can never be sure that what has been promised him personally, in private correspondence or in face-to-face interviews, will really be carried out.

It was a blow to Claridge Robertson, not alone to his pride, for it was the first severe set-back he had received in his career for many years; but he also read in it the knowledge of his political death. The man against whom the administration has once turned can never be fully reinstated in the public's favor. He carries always about with him an atmosphere of failure, and after-successes are rendered less striking by its recollection.

He was still the great man, but not quite so great as he was yesterday, although his political status had not changed. Just a broken promise had done this, and broken promises are powerful weapons against a rising man. He set his teeth hard. There was nothing to do but to face the music. He let the hours slip away in the library while he fought the battle of disappointment.

At the news of his defeat what would be the feelings of his promised wife? He knew how many women shrink from the responsibilities and publicity of a position like this, and he believed her one of them. Her modesty, her fears and doubts, as they had been expressed to him but a few hours before, led him to the desired conclusion that the pleasure she would feel at her release would compensate him in some measure for his own chagrin. He had still much to offer, as much as he had the night when, in the moon-

light, she had given him to suppose that he had but to ask her and she would be honored by his choice. He would not send her word. He would wait and tell her in the porch that evening, when they would be quite alone, and her sweet sympathy would heal the bruises of a heart not so calloused as he had believed it to the disappointments of his profession.

While he fought his fight manfully in the library, the ingénue in the room above was fighting her own battles all over again. She had believed them finished. She had thought that, at the touch of pen and paper, at the clasp of hands receiving her surrender, the knowledge of certainty would destroy forever any lingering doubts she might have as to the wisdom of her choice.

But at the touch of his lips on hers all the repulsions of youth at the kiss of age overwhelmed her. So marriage like this meant more than she had bargained for! It was not a passive evil that she would not be loved by the man she adored, but it meant an active ill that she would be loved by someone whom she loathed—yes, loathed; there was no uncertainty in the summing up now. There still were moments when she was true to herself, and these moments lately were more and more frequent. She had thought of Claridge Robertson as a man who would be kind to her, give her pretty dresses, place her in a position hedged about with definite delights; she had hoped to find with him excitement enough to compensate her for the one thing she would lose. She knew, all at once, that she was facing a different problem—the problem that faces thousands of women who sell themselves for material things and in the repellent force of materialism find their punishment. She could never accept him for her husband—that was certain. The one incautious embrace had undone all the good he had accomplished by his delicate attentions and his promises.

She rang a bell, and at Jane's appearance demanded that a time-table be brought; this, with other directions, eased her mind of its mental strain.

She donned a plain traveling gown of blue, with an unpretending little hat to match, covered with a chiffon veil. She wrote a note to her hostess, one to the Honorable Claridge Robertson, one to Edith Deming; then she decided to slip out of the house quietly and walk to the station. Jane was to follow her the next day with her trunk, after receiving a telegram announcing her safe arrival.

She took her supper in a quaint little inn near the station, where she watched the sunset slowly darken into night; where she sat with eyes closed, dreaming of the beautiful twilight in the rose garden, of the seat about the elm, of the Summer-house and the boat, of the many places where she had loved, which were to her now hallowed by those memories. A little smile stole over her lips, and she occasionally studied her time-table.

It was early dusk when the carriage came to take Kenneth Bigelow to the station. The statesman had been in the library all the afternoon, planning, struggling, enduring. With the evening came resignation. He had given his life to his country; it was for his country to decide where he could do the most good. He no longer felt the bitter resentment of the earlier hours. He had learned the lesson of patience. He had often remonstrated with other men who had fought bitterly against what they termed the injustice of a government that crushed out their life and left them mangled and inert. He had now to bring the lesson home to himself. He would take up the reins again with no uncertain grasp, and when the time came for him to take the next backward step he would take it without even the protests he had so far allowed himself. He was but a unit, with a unit's work to do; and, having done it, he must step aside for newer strength. His moment of bitterness had passed. He heard the wheels approach and went out on the porch to say good-bye.

The two men clasped hands a long time. An impulse came to the states-

man. "Kenneth," he said, in a low tone, still fraught with feeling, "I am not to receive the appointment, after all; they have sent me word from the department."

"You mean it?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry." It is hard for a man to express sympathy to another, but there was feeling in the younger voice. Then, as he stepped into the carriage, Kenneth said, softly, "You have her."

"Yes, I have her."

That was all; then they parted.

As the carriage turned, it nearly upset Edith Deming, who was coming back to the house, her dress disordered, her eyes swollen with weeping. She had been all this time in the garden, unconscious of the hours.

Kenneth jumped out to say goodbye. He could not ignore her appearance. "You are ill?"

"No, not ill," she answered, and as she looked at his sympathetic face, all at once her dislike of him seemed an unworthy thing. Just because he was young and beautiful and good she had hated him, and the man she had placed above him was less worthy. "Not ill," she repeated, in a tired, trailing tone, "only tired, so tired."

He led her gently to a seat on the porch.

She pointed to the carriage. "There is nothing more you can do; do not wait."

He touched his lips to her fevered hand.

"You are kind," she murmured, gratefully. "I shall be all right presently. I wish you every happiness; you deserve it."

He ran down the steps and jumped again into the carriage.

The delay with Mrs. Deming and the statesman gave him just time to purchase his ticket and get his seat. The car was full, and he did not notice a quiet little figure, veiled, with dark dress and hat, which had followed him.

At the junction this train, a local, waited an hour for the up-express to pass. He jumped out and walked

restlessly back and forth. He was anxious to have everything over now—to go to his father and tell him that he had come back for good, willing even to take up the hated work; it could, at least, prevent him from thinking, and that seemed at present the only thing in life worth while. He went over again the events of the last weeks. He admitted the equipment that had been allotted him—youth, health, the power to please others, opportunity coming when he knew it, not skulking by in the night but meeting him open-faced, with forelock ready to be caught in his willing fingers. He was going home disillusioned, disappointed, with nothing gained. His fighting chance had been given him, and he had accomplished naught.

The sight of Edith Deming's face had produced a strange feeling of sympathy in his heart, something he had never experienced before. One must suffer in order to feel the suffering of others. There must be many in trouble whom he might reach. This was what a man should have—something to lift him out of the commonplace, something besides his own gain. He had been denied all else. Perhaps this was what kept men from despair, suicide—the knowledge that they were of some help to their kind.

He felt a soft, ungloved hand stealing through his arm, and little fingers interlaced his own.

"Kenneth, dear, you will forgive me? I really didn't mean it—I——"

He turned and looked at her. His whole body trembled in an ecstasy of feeling. Was it a dream? He had felt the same sensation when he returned from unconsciousness.

"You—it is you?"

"Yes, it is I," said the ingénue, timidly, as if she felt it necessary to apologize for the fact of her existence. "I want you to take me home with you, Kenneth—or anywhere—I don't care, so I am with you. I can't live without you."

He could not grasp her meaning all at once.

"Don't look at me so," and she

withdrew her hands to cover her face; "it was bad enough to run away, and follow you and all, without having you look at me like that."

"But I don't understand. You mean that you have changed your mind again—that you really love me, as I believed; that you are not going to marry Mr. Robertson? Oh, tell me, dear, what do you mean? I don't dare believe, I don't dare hope—I have suffered so."

"Listen, Kenneth." She tried to make the situation less tragic. "I was tempted for a while—any girl would have been—and I did want to wear low-cut gowns; you know one never can where you live—"

"Low-cut gowns? What have they to do with it?" He was still more bewildered.

"I'll tell you all about it some day, soon, dear; I can't now. Well, I thought it all over and concluded that I couldn't stand him; he's old, and I'm young, and so are you. I believed I could marry for ambition, to please mamma—no, not mamma, —to please myself, and all that, but I can't. Don't you understand now? Don't be stupid."

"I'm not stupid, but it's hard for a man to realize heaven all at once."

The beauty and luxury of Ilkley Villa had been left behind. The gibbous moon was rising over the rose garden; everywhere was the hush and glory of the night; the lake, on which dipped a miniature canoe tied to a little wharf, was lapping the bank with musical waves; there was a swinging lantern throwing long scarlet streams in the Summer-house, there were the brilliant stars overhead, and the harmony of far-away players. About them was the disorder of a wayside station, with its ugly, two-storied building, its bare

platform, a dusty way-train hideously commonplace, the road to the track stony and grass-grown. But they were unconscious of their environment; to them the wooden shanty was as beautiful as the Taj Mahal, the road a golden path with one end in paradise, the train itself a wonderful air-ship to take them about a strange universe.

Not one thought of harshness had entered Kenneth Bigelow's mind concerning the ingénue. Always he had shielded her from his own criticism; she was young, impressionable, and he had taken too much for granted—that was all. He had wished her to be happy and ignorant of his own suffering.

And she—she was a modern *Undine* who had found her soul through love. She had freed herself from the threads of insincerity, of futile ambitions, of dissatisfactions that were binding her every day more closely, and from which soon it would be too late to escape. As Edith Deming had told her, it was her one chance of happiness—her fighting chance, and she had taken it, seized it just as it was getting beyond her reach. She regretted no more. She had gained all that was worth while.

The whistle of the up-train broke into their reveries. They watched the monster coming nearer, nearer, nearer, sweeping toward them with resistless force, tearing by without a second's pause, then gradually disappearing, leaving a spark-flecked cloud behind.

The whistle of their own train followed; then the "All aboard!" They clambered in, and, hand in hand, in the narrow seat of the local, pursued their way—started on the long path that they were to traverse together, the long path that leads, when love guards it, into the Elysian Fields.



STRANGE how everyone in this world always wants a lower berth, but for the next would prefer an upper.

KITTY WANTS TO WRITE

By Gelett Burgess

KITTY wants to write! Kitty intellectual!
 What has been effectual to turn her stockings blue?
 Kitty's seventh season has brought sufficient reason,
 She has done 'most everything that there is left to do!
 Half of them to laugh about and half of them to rue.
 Now we wait in terror for Kitty's wildest error.
 What has she to write about? Wheeeeeeeew!

Kitty wants to write! Débutante was Kitty,
 Frivolous and witty as ever bud that blew.
 Kitty lacked sobriety, yet she ran society,
 A leader whom the chaperons indulged a year or two;
 Corner-men, eligibles, dancing-dolls she knew.
 Kitty then was slighted, ne'er again invited;
 What has she to write about? Wheeeeeeeew!

Kitty wants to write! At the Social Settlement
 Girls of Kitty's mettle meant a mission for a few;
 Men to teach the classes, men to mould the masses,
 Men to follow Kitty to adventures strange and new.
 Some of her benevolence was hidden out of view!
 A patroness offended, Kitty's slumming ended.
 What is there to write about? Wheeeeeeeew!

Kitty wants to write! Kitty was a mystic,
 Deep from cabalistic lore many hints she drew!
 Freaks of all description, Hindoo and Egyptian,
 Prattled in her parlor—such a wild and hairy crew!
 Many came for money, and one or two to woo;
 Kitty's pet astrologer wanted to acknowledge her!
 What has she to write about? Wheeeeeeeew!

Kitty wants to write! Kitty was a doctor;
 Nothing ever shocked her, though they hazed a little, too!
 Kitty learned of medicos how a heart unsteady goes,
 Besides a score of secrets that are secrets still to you.
 Kitty's course in medicine gave her many a clue;
 Much of modern history now is less a mystery.
 What has she to write about? Wheeeeeeeew!

Kitty wants to write! Everybody's writing!
 Won't it be exciting, the panic to ensue?
 We who all have known her, think what we have shown her!
 Read it in the magazines! Which half of this is true?
 Where did she get this idea? Is it him, or who?
 Kitty's wretched enemies now will learn what venom is!
 What has she to write about? Wheeeeeeeew!

“THE TREE OF LOVE”

By Justus Miles Forman

“NON, monsieur,” said the duke, smiling, “I shall not go.”

“But, monseigneur!” cried the Englishman, “it is death to stay, certain death!”

“That is ver’ probable, monsieur,” agreed the duke, composedly. He turned his face up to the moonlight—the two were sitting on the broad south terrace of the château—and the long brown curls fell away from his cheeks and back on his shoulders.

“Still I shall not go, monsieur,” said he, smiling again. “Look you, monsieur! In the *chapelle* yonder there are fifteen marble tombs, ver’ fine, you ’ave seen them, all the Ducs d’Angoulesme—*requiescant!*—an’ in all the fifteen nev-aire, nev-aire one ’oo was afraid. They ’ave been all kin’ of men, *ces* Ducs d’Angoulesme, not all good men, *mal-heureusement*, but al-ways brave, monsieur, al-ways brave. Would you ’ave the las’ *duc* run away from the Château Hautcœur because there is danger? Ah, *non, non, non!* The las’ *duc* will stay, my ol’ frien’, an’ if these so-foolish peasants, which do not know w’at they want, kill ’im—w’y, the las’ *duc* will die. ’E will nev-aire run away.”

He threw back the long ruffles of lace from his slim hands, and poured himself a *petit verre* of crimson liqueur from the decanter that stood on the little table by his elbow.

“Thees death, monsieur,” he said, holding the tiny glass up to the moonlight, and eying it appreciatively, “thees death is no such a vairy terrible thing, *après tout*, an’ common,

but so common! Listen! ev-ery one of my good *ancêtres*, ’e ’as died, ev-ery one. Figure to yourself! Thees death, it is only the las’ pain. We all ’ave pains; you, monsieur, an’ I, we ’ave ’ad pains sharp as death, *hein?* Death, ’e is only the las’ one. A leetle sooner, a leetle later, w’at is the difference? Me, I ’ave no such great fear of ’im.”

He lay back in his great chair, laughing gently, and the soft Summer moonlight fell white across his face. It was a very handsome face, such a face as a Duc d’Angoulesme should have, pale and oval, with a slender, high-bridged nose and arched eyebrows. The eyes and mouth were a woman’s, but the jaw was strong and the chin very prominent. He was a young man, under thirty, and very fine in white and yellow satin with ruffles of the priceless lace from Valence. He wore his own hair, which was a brown shot with gold, and fell about his face and shoulders in long curls that had little need of the hair-dresser’s art.

The other man, an Englishman, of middle age, was Henry, Viscount Stanwood, and he, with his daughter, had been for a week a guest at the Château Hautcœur.

The two men were sitting on the great paved terrace that lay at the southern side of the château. Before them the avenue swept in a broad curve down between a row of firs eastward to the gates, a quarter of a mile distant. Across the avenue the gardens, laid out in the formal geometrical Italian fashion, descended terrace by terrace, with broad marble

steps and sculptured fountains, to the little lake far below, much as the gardens sweep down nowadays from the front of the Palace at Versailles.

Behind the two men rose the southern façade of the château, black against the moonlight. It was the newest wing of the great pile, and was fashioned after the rather florid Italian Renaissance style. The older portions of the château lay beyond to the north and west. There was a huge square of inky gloom before the building, but out near the edge of the terrace, where the two men sat, the moonlight lay white upon the marble pavement.

"A leetle sooner, a leetle later, w'at is the difference?" said the Duc d'Angoulesme again; but he spoke in a low tone as if to himself. The elder man leaned forward across the little table.

"What is the difference, monseigneur?" he demanded. "What is the difference? All the difference that lies between a shocking death at the hands of a rabble of crazed and bloodthirsty peasantry and a long, peaceful and honorable life, saved by a merely reasonable discretion. Valor lies not all in martyrdom, monseigneur. Ah, make your escape with us to-night, while you may. When this madness of a popular uprising is past you can return. Come with us!"

But the young duke shook his head, still with his gentle smile.

"*Hélas, non, monsieur,*" said he. "No, ol' frien', I must stay an' you mus' go. It is the firs' time that a Duc d'Angoulesme evaire sen' a guest away from Château Hautcœur. Me, I am *désolé* jus' to think of it. No, monsieur; it make my heart sad to refuse, but—I cannot go. Per-haps they will not kill me, these poor silly sheep, though I think they will, for they are quite mad. Still I mus' stay."

"If you would only conceal yourself for a time!" cried the elder man. "If you would only come away for a week! This madness of the peasantry cannot last."

"Ah, my frien'," interrupted the duke, "there is w'ere you mistake. Thees is no little thing, thees uprising. I will tell you that all our *belle* France shall shake with it from south to north. No, monsieur, it is no leetle thing. Look you! the peasantry, *pauvres bêtes*, 'ave been groun' an' groun' under our heels with these taxes till they will bear no more. The beast, monsieur, w'en 'e is in the corner 'e will turn an' fight, *n'est-ce pas?* *Bien!* it is so with these peasants. Me, I 'ave said it to the keeng many time, an' to—an' to the other men w'ich rule France, but they will not hear. Monsieur, there are dark days coming, you will see. Per-haps I shall be better dead—but al-ways better dead than to run away—al-ways!"

"And can you look nowhere for aid?" asked the Englishman. "Will not the king help you? Will not he send men to defend the Château Hautcœur?"

"The keeng, monsieur?" said the duke, with a deprecating little laugh. "Oh, monsieur, monsieur! w'en was a keeng evaire thinking of othaire people's danger? No; I sen' men to 'im for 'is wars, but 'e nevaire sen' any to me. You see, monsieur, thees keeng 'e is not so vairy, vairy frien'ly to me. We 'ave two, three leetle quarrel. 'E wan' me to do some-theengs w'at touch my honaire, an' me, I speak jus' a leetle loud, *hein?* *Et puis,* 'e does not like w'en I take the side of the *pauvre* peasants, an' tell 'im that they are tax too 'eavy, that they will turn an' destroy France. No, monsieur, we are not jus' like brothairs, the keeng an' me. Oh, yes, I am the good vassal. I sen' 'im men for 'is wars, an' I say '*Vive le roi!*' w'en 'is name come up, but—there were Ducs d'Angoulesme, monsieur, before there were keengs of France, an' the Angoulesme honaire 'as no stains."

The elder man sighed anxiously, and shook his head.

"Aye," said he, "and that same Angoulesme honor is brother to a

most pestilent stubbornness. The Angoulesme honor, monseigneur, will be but a memory a week hence, for the last duke will have died a martyr to it. Is not the perpetuation of a great family worth more than a point of bravery?"

The young duke sighed.

"Not at such a cost, monsieur," said he. "Bettaire the name die with honaire than leeve by cowardice. Look you! if I had a wife and a leetle son so that the name could be carried on I would send them away with you, to-night, for safety. If I 'ad any family at all they should go; but I am alone, monsieur. I 'ave nevaire marry. Hélas! I 'ave nevaire love anyone till—till a leetle w'ile ago——"

He sprang up from the table, and paced back and forth in the moonlight, his hands clasped behind his head.

"Nevaire till a leetle w'ile ago!" he cried, gently, in a changed voice. "Then I know w'at love is. Then I know w'at the poet 'ave in 'is 'eart w'en 'e write 'is songs. Then I know w'at the musician feel w'en 'e set the songs to music. Look, monsieur, look! thees moon shine w'ite jus' for love. Thees night win' 'e is soft an' low. Turn your face to 'im. 'E bring up the scent of roses from the garden, roses and mignonette. Listen, monsieur, listen to the fountains splash in the dark! Hear the leaves stir! It is a night for love, monsieur! Moonlight an' sweet air an' roses. Ev-ery thing breathe love an' love an' love again!"

Then all at once he caught his hands to his face, and halted in his swift pacing back and forth. He drew a long deep breath, and dropped back into his chair, once more laughing a little.

"Tiens!" he cried, "I biccume a poet myself! You mus' forgive me, monsieur. The moonlight an' the roses, they make me jus' a leetle mad, I think." He turned at the sound of hurrying footsteps in the driveway below the terrace, and stood up, resting his hands on the marble balustrade.

"Qui est là?" he called.

"C'est moi, monseigneur, moi!" cried the man below, in a breathless voice, and turned his face upward to the moonlight as he clung to the stone of the terrace wall.

"Henri?" said the duke, "Henri! But what is it, *mon enfant*? You have been running. What is it?"

"Oh, monseigneur, monseigneur!" cried the servant. "They are coming to-night, those swine of swine, those dogs of shame! They are coming to burn the château. You must escape, monseigneur! You must hide. They will kill you. They are burning the town now. Look! you can see the red glow over the tree-tops. Oh, monseigneur, you must save yourself! In two or three hours they will be here."

The duke smiled down into the old servant's face.

"Bien, Henri," said he, gently. "Let them come. We will wait for them. The Ducs d'Angoulesme do not hide, *mon petit*."

"But monseigneur, monseigneur!" cried the man, raising his clasped hands imploringly.

"Henri!" said the duke, "*c'est bien assez*, Henri! Go you and tell the grooms that monsieur's coaches shall be ready at once, but at once, Henri!" Then he turned about to the Englishman, who had risen and stood watching the red glare over the tree-tops to the east.

"They lose no time, monsieur," he said, lightly. "You an'—an' mademoiselle mus' go within the hour. Are you all ready, monsieur? You shall go by the leetle gate behin' the flower gardens. It will be quite safe. By morning you shall be in Bordeaux, an' you shall take a ship from there. *Tiens*, 'ere come mademoiselle!"

The girl came swiftly across the terrace into the moonlight. She wore a great hat with black plumes, and a traveling cloak was slipping from her shoulders. People were wont to turn about in the street to look when she passed by in her coach or in her chair, and at a ball men meeting her eyes for the first time caught their breaths with a quick little gasp, and found their

voices unsteady when they tried to speak. Yet she bore her great beauty with a wonderful, girlish unconsciousness, and it was so to the very end of her life.

She paused an instant to curtsy in response to the sweeping bow of the Duc d'Angoulesme. Then she turned at once to her father.

"I heard the servant's warning," she said. "We must start very soon, must we not? James has taken most of your things out to the coach, and Marie has taken all of mine. I am quite ready. But James wishes to see you about something important. Will you go to him?"

Then when the Englishman had disappeared within the château, she moved a little nearer to the Duc d'Angoulesme, and looked up into his face.

"Oh, monseigneur!" she cried, very low, "is there nothing that I can say or do to make you save yourself, to persuade you to come with us till this danger is past?"

"Nothing, mademoiselle," said the duke, with his steady smile. "I must stay. *Hélas!* I did not thenk there was anything w'ich I would not do at the comman' of mademoiselle, but to run from danger—ah, no, I mus' not do that!"

"Yet to stay is certain death," murmured the girl.

"Yes—mademoiselle," said the duke, looking into her eyes. Then he threw up his hands with an unsteady laugh.

"Ah, but no, no, no!" he cried, gaily. "We mus' not talk of such things. I make you to be sad, mademoiselle, an' that—that is mos' impolite. Perhaps I do not die at all. We 'ave a—a *légende* 'ere at Hautcœur that the château shall nevaire, nevaire be taken biccuse the ghos' of the firs' duc, Cœur de Lion—you mus' 'ave seen 'is armor an' 'is weapons in the *grande salle*, all of silver—'is ghos' will defen' it." And he laughed again, lightly. "Per-'aps 'e save my life, Cœur de Lion, eh? 'E was a ver' great fightaire, mademoiselle."

But the girl made a little impatient gesture.

"Will you not be serious, monseigneur?" she begged. "Ah, if only I could make you see that it is not bravery to stay here waiting for your death, but only stubbornness! You are afraid to seem cowardly, monseigneur! Sometimes it is braver to run away."

"Ah, mademoiselle, mademoiselle!" protested the duke, raising his hands. "W'at is the good to talk of it? We was'e our las' hour. Shall we walk in the moonlight for a little? Monsieur le Vicomte will be a long time. See, we shall not go far, jus' down on the terrace of the garden. It is vairy beautiful there w'en the moon shine."

They went down upon the drive and across it to the broad marble steps that led to the upper terrace of the gardens. There were firs about them, tall and black and pointed, and the air was full of their keen, acrid scent; but when a puff of warm wind arose it brought a stronger scent of roses from beyond.

They walked to the edge of the terrace and stood looking down on the fountains and pools and geometrically arranged shrubbery; and the curving steps of marble that swept gracefully about on either side—down over the long open vista which dropped, terrace by terrace, to meet the lagoon far beneath. They stood in a half shadow, but the great shelves below them were in the light. The moon shone white as snow upon the marble steps, the balustrades and copings, and gray upon the shrubbery. It flashed in a shower of diamonds from the water that gurgled in the fountains, and lay like a sheet of silver on the still lagoon. Frogs croaked from the water across the lake; a cricket, hidden under the tall black firs, chirped incessantly, and the soft splash of the fountains was like wind in the tree-tops.

"Monseigneur!" said the girl, in a low, shaking voice, "will you not, for my sake, save your life?"

"No, mademoiselle," said the duke, after a long time.

"Monseigneur," she said again, "if you will not save your life for my sake, will you—will you let me—share your

death?—for I will not live if you are dead."

"Mademoiselle, mademoiselle!" cried the duke, sharply; but she put out her hands against him and held him.

"Oh, hear me, monseigneur," she cried. "Please hear me to the end, and do not interrupt. You—you care for me—somewhat, I think— No, no, let me finish! I have seen it in your eyes, monseigneur, heard it in your voice, for you have a softer look in your eyes and a gentler tone in your voice when you are with me. Ah, what woman does not know when a man—a man—cares? Listen! you started to—speak of—this—the other day, but we were interrupted, and there has been no opportunity since, till, yesterday this dreadful revolt of the peasants was brought to your ears, and you knew that it meant death or flight to you. Then, oh, then you would not speak, for you thought it were only to wreck my happiness, since you would not save your life, and you would not have me involved in your death. Monseigneur, your honor will not let you ask for my love. See, see! I give it you! What are you going to do with me, monseigneur?"

Then, after a time, since the Duc d'Angoulesme only stood silent with his face in his hands, she went on, more composedly and very low:

"I will not live if you die, my heart, for I love you with all my body and soul. I know very well that it is unmaidenly of me to speak so, that it is shocking, unheard of. I think my father would die of horror if he knew, but I am not ashamed. I know that you love me, and that your honor has held you silent. If your honor holds you here to meet a dreadful death I wish to meet it with you! Ah, my love, will you say nothing at all to me?"

"Oh, mademoiselle!" whispered the Duc d'Angoulesme, in a voice that trembled and played strange tricks; "oh, mademoiselle, I 'ave love you since the first moment I 'ave seen your beautiful face. I 'ave love so as I theenk no man nevaire, nevaire love any woman before, so that my

love is jus' worship, mademoiselle, so that w'en I pray '*Ave Maria gratia plena*' I see your face; so that w'en I am alone I see it al-ways, an' w'en I sleep it smile at me.

"W'en the organ play in the *chappelle* yonder for vespaire, for benediction, it is jus' your voice. W'en the sky is blue at *midi*, it is your blue eyes, an' w'en the night is black it is your black hair. Mademoiselle, the touch of your han' set me to trembling, the look of your eyes it make me wan' to pray. Love you? I am *all* love for you, all! There is nos-sing, nos-sing in me that do not cry out for love of you. Oh, mademoiselle, you are the lovelies' thing that God 'as evaire made!"

The girl, leaning against him, turned her white face up to his with a little sobbing laugh of joy and content, and the Duc d'Angoulesme drew in his breath sharply.

"And you will let me stay?" she said. "You will not deny me that? Listen! You have a *curé* here. He must marry us quickly. Then we will wait together—you and I, monseigneur."

"No, mademoiselle," said the Duc d'Angoulesme, "you shall not stay. I should be a murderer to let you stay. I will not 'ave your beautiful life cut short so. You mus' go with monsieur, your father, mademoiselle! Me, it is my place 'ere. You mus' go back to that col' Englan' w'ere they wait for you, w'ere they love you, *ma reine*, w'ere they listen to 'ear your voice again, an' are so ver' sad that you do not come more quick. I shall not let you stay. I shall sen' you away by force, if I mus'. Ah, mademoiselle, mademoiselle, you tear my 'eart! Do not make it so 'ard for me!" He turned away with a quivering face and hands that wrestled with each other. But the girl caught him by the arm and pulled him about once more.

"Why, then," said she, in her low, sweet voice, which was deeper than most women's voices, "why, then let us say no more about it, monseigneur. See, I shall beg no more. I would not cause you pain."

"Oh," cried the Duc d'Angoulesme, "oh, you are kin', mademoiselle. You are good as you are beautiful. I cannot let you die. We will say no more about it. We mus' not spoil our las' quart d'heure. Mademoiselle, the kiss of a man w'at is dead can do no 'arm, *n'est-ce pas?* It is jus' a memory. It make no claims, it tie no bonds. I shall be dead to-morrow, me. Will you let me kiss you once, mademoiselle, bicause I love you bettaire than all thees worl' or the nex'?" He bent toward her eagerly, with the long brown hair falling about his cheeks; and in the half gloom she could see his eyes, great and dark and glowing. Then she went straight into his arms with a little quivering sob, and all the wide, moonlit world, all pain and grief and tragedy and death, stood away from them for a golden moment.

Afterward they remained for a long while silent, the duke with clenched hands, breathing very fast; the girl weeping softly and sobbing from time to time.

"Mademoiselle," said he, presently; and stopped because his voice was shaking. "Oh, mademoiselle, I 'ave been for jus' one leetle minute inside the gates of 'eaven, *là-haut*, an' it is 'ard oh, so ver' 'ard, to come back to thees worl'. I 'ad not know' before, *ma reine*, w'at it was, that 'eaven. It is all the beautiful things in all the worl', all the fragrance of the roses, all the sweetness of the *musique*, all the won'erful 'appiness w'at a man 'e dream sometimes, till 'e tremble for a joy 'e cannot explain—all these put together in one so small *morceau*. Ah, mademoiselle, it is 'ard to come back to thees worl'! An' that is all the 'eaven I may 'ave. In one leetle time you will be gone, an' I—I shall be—alone. No, no, *mignonne*, do not ask me aggain to go, for I grow weak jus' for a moment. Do not ask me to go, for I mus' stay. I bear a ver' great name, mademoiselle, an' its honaire, it 'as nevaire yet been tarnish'. I mus' not soil it. Oh, *ma reine, ma reine*, if I were not the Duc d'Angoulesme! My tree of love 'e bear bittaire fruit, *n'est-*

ce pas? Do you know the ballade of 'The Tree of Love,' mademoiselle? We 'ave a *poète* 'ere in France, one Maître François Villon. 'E was not a good man, but 'e 'ave a great soul—*non*, 'e is not alive now. 'E is dead since—since three hundred year. But 'e 'ave a great soul. An' thees François Villon 'e 'ave made a ballade ver' beautiful:

"*J'ay ung arbre de la plante d'amours,
Enraciné en mon cuer proprement.*"

"Someone 'ave made a—a—w'at you say?—a *traduction* in English. It is not so beautiful as the French, but it tell the story:

"I 'ave a tree, a graft of love,
That in my heart 'as taken root;
Sad are the buds an' blooms thereof,
And bittaire sorrow is its fruit;
Yet, since it was a tender shoot
So greatly hath its shadow spread,
That underneath all joy is dead,
And all my pleasant days are flown,
Nor can I slay it, nor instead
Plant any tree save thees alone.*

"That is jus' the beginning. Bittaire fruit, mademoiselle, bittaire fruit! Ah, *mon Dieu*, I mus' not talk so! I make you sad. Come, we go back to the terrace. Monsieur le Vicomte 'e will be ready now, I theenk. You will forget, mademoiselle, that I did speak so? You will remember jus' that I loved you bettaire than any-thing? I did not mean that the fruit was bittaire, mademoiselle; no, no, not bittaire—sweet, *ma reine*, the ver' sweetes'. I shall smile at death. Come, we mus' go!"

Lord Stanwood was coming out of the door as they mounted the steps.

"Everything is ready, Beatrix," said he, "and the coaches are waiting by the stables. We are to drive out by a small rear gate in the west wall. They say it is absolutely safe." He turned to the Duc d'Angoulesme, and his voice trembled a little with emotion, for he had loved the young Frenchman long.

"For the last time, monseigneur," said he, "will you not come with us?"

*Adapted from the English translation by Andrew Lang.

I cannot bear the thought of your staying here to face that mad rabble. Will you not save yourself?"

But the duke held up his two hands with a laugh of protest.

"Monsieur, monsieur!" he begged. "No more, monsieur, if you love me! I will not go. Shall I see you into the coach?"

He took the hand of the Lady Beatrix to descend the terrace steps, and it was cold as ice, but very steady.

Before the great stables two traveling coaches were waiting, each with bags and boxes of luggage strapped behind. The eight horses stamped and tossed their fine heads and rattled the bits in their mouths, and a little group of postilions and grooms stood by. In the group was the servant Henri, who had brought, a little while before, news of the near approach of the maddened peasants. He was a big old man, a Breton, with grizzled hair and—strangely enough in that day of shaven faces—a great square white beard. He had been all his life at Château Hautcœur, and had carried the present duke about on his shoulders when the duke was a child, so that he was the most privileged of all the retainers.

He came up to his master once more, with his strong old hands clasped before him. "Monseigneur!" he cried, in a low voice, "they will be here in half an hour. Oh, monseigneur, go! Hide yourself for the night! Think of the house of Angoulesme! Go, monseigneur, go!"

"Henri!" said the duke, sharply, "I have said once that I will not go. Enough, Henri! Be silent!" And the old man made off toward the château, shaking his head and muttering. When he had gone a little distance he began to run.

"If you do not mind," said Lady Beatrix to her father, "I would like to sit in the second coach with Marie rather than in the other with you. I am—I am a little tired, and perhaps I may sleep. Later I can change, if you prefer." Lord Stanwood made some slight objection, but the two women had already entered one of the coaches,

and, with a little shrug, he clambered into the other.

The Duc d'Angoulesme bent close to the window of the second coach, and his lips burned upon the cold white hand that was raised to them.

"Adieu, mademoiselle," whispered the duke. "God guard you on your way! Remember that I—loved you, *ma reine*, loved you al-ways to the en'. Your name shall be the last word I speak. *Adieu*, mademoiselle! Ah, not bittaire fruit; sweet, mademoiselle, sweet. *Adieu!*"

The two coaches swung about the end of the stables toward the little avenue that led to the west wall. They disappeared in the gloom of the trees, and the Duc d'Angoulesme turned slowly back toward Château Hautcœur with his head hanging low. He mounted the broad south terrace, where the moonlight still lay in a pallid flood, and he dropped down into his chair at the little table, and poured himself a *petit verre* of the crimson liqueur. The empty chair across the table stared at him annoyingly. He had a new, strange sense of loneliness, of utter desolation, though he had been used to living much alone and to finding himself excellent company.

The rugged, anxious visage of Milor Stanwood rose out of the night's gloom to confront him, and it was somehow dear. He found himself wishing that Lord Stanwood was there, in that place, with his kind eyes and his round, hearty voice.

Then a pale, beautiful face—the most beautiful face in all the world—blue-eyed under straight brows and a great mass of black hair, came out of the night, and the lips parted in drooping curves, and a little perfume breathed from the cloud of hair.

"Oh, my lovelies! Oh, *cœur de mon cœur!*" cried the Duc d'Angoulesme, and dropped his head upon his bent arms over the little table with a choking sob like a woman's.

He could feel the warm, smooth softness—the marvelous softness—of her face crushed against his. He could

feel her breath against his cheek, the touch of her hair upon his forehead. Her voice, very low, and sweet, and unsteady, trembled through his brain. Her breathing stirred against his heart.

"Mother of God!" cried the Duc d'Angoulesme, standing stiff and strained and quivering beside the marble balustrade. "Mary, full of sorrows, have pity, or I go mad!" He held out his two arms and drew them slowly close as if they held something against his breast, and he bent his head until the brown curls fell across his cheeks, and his face, with eyes closed, seemed to meet an unseen something out of the night. Then he gave a sudden sharp little cry as if he were in keen pain, and fell to pacing fiercely up and down the terrace in the moonlight, with his hands trembling and clenching at his sides.

A servant in livery ran from the open door of the château, and called out incoherently as he ran. The man's eyes shone round and protruding, and he shook like one in a violent chill.

"Monseigneur, monseigneur!" he cried, chattering for fright. "Oh, monseigneur, there is a miracle! The armor, the silver armor of Gilles Cœur de Lion! Oh, monseigneur, a miracle!"

"Well?" said the duke, sharply. "Well? What of it?"

"It is gone, monseigneur!" faltered the lackey, "but gone! Name of God, a miracle! Who should take the silver armor of Gilles Cœur de Lion from the *grande salle*?" And the wretch fell to praying to the Virgin, and to his patron saint, in a voice that broke and quavered and ran up into a strange falsetto.

But the Duc d'Angoulesme waved an impatient hand—indeed, it is doubtful if he had even heard the fellow's mad tale—and took up his march again, back and forth in the pale moonlight, smiting his hands together and turning his desolate eyes up to the sapphire sky.

So he walked for a long time, but at last, as he turned at the end of the

terrace and faced the west where lay, out of sight in the gloom, the stables and the rose gardens and the little road that led to the west wall, he halted very suddenly and pressed his hands over his eyes with a faint cry, and stared again, while the heart within him beat in quick, suffocating throbs.

"Mademoiselle!" cried the duke, in a great voice. "You, mademoiselle? You!"

The girl moved down the length of the terrace swiftly. Her long traveling cloak with the many capes fell from her shoulders to the marble pavement, and she came on toward the duke in her gown of gray and rose. She said no word, but caught him by the shoulders with her two hands, and laid her face upon his breast as a tired child goes to its mother, and only a little nervous, overwrought sob came from her lips.

"You, mademoiselle? You?" said the Duc d'Angoulesme again, in a trembling whisper. He said the words over and over, as if he could not believe his senses.

After a long time the girl raised her face, and smiled into his eyes. "Did you think I would go away to safety, leaving you here to your death, my heart?" she whispered. "Did you think my love so little and so weak as that? Did I not tell you that I should not live if you died? Listen! I slipped out of the coach, when all the postilions and the outriders were gone forward to open the gate in the wall at the foot of the rose gardens. That is why I rode in the second coach, and not with my father. Marie, my maid, knew, and she is not to tell my father till they reach Pont le Duc, in four hours' time. They halt there to change horses." She laid her head upon his breast once more, smiling contentedly.

"You cannot send me from you again, monseigneur," she murmured. "You will have to let me stay now, for I have nowhere to go, and if you send me away with servants to care for me I shall kill myself."

The Duc d'Angoulesme drew himself up and his arm tightened about her shoulders. He laughed aloud, a great trembling laugh of unspeakable joy, of triumph.

"Oh, lovelies! oh, braves' in all the worl'!" said he, with his lips against her cheek. Then he raised his head and called out, sharply:

"Jacques, François! Hé, François, Émile!"

The servants came running from the château.

"Père Antoine!" cried the duke. "Bring Père Antoine at once, but at once, *tout à l'instant, mes enfants! vite, vite!*" And directly the priest appeared, a tall, thin old man, white-haired, eagle-beaked, shuffling in his black cassock. The duke faced him over the head of Lady Beatrix Stanwood, and the duke's eyes shone with a certain new light.

"*Mon père,*" he said, quickly, "here are two people who would be married with no least delay. I, Louis, Duc d'Angoulesme, and Beatrix, *Miladi de Stanwood*. Make haste, *mon père*, for there is no time to be lost. Make haste!"

The *curé's* hands were up to heaven and his jaw dropped, but the duke took him by the shoulder, half-dragging, half-pushing him; and so they came through the great hall of the château, and across a little open courtyard, to the ancient chapel, where fifteen Dukes of Angoulesme lay in their square tombs, hands crossed upon their swords, awaiting the judgment day.

A quarter of an hour later the sixteenth duke with his duchess went slowly back across the little courtyard and through the great hall to the south terrace. The duke's arm was drawn about his wife's waist, and her head lay upon his shoulder with wide, glad eyes. A little knot of wondering, whispering servants tip-toed after them, and a sadly bewildered old priest prayed desperately before the chapel altar.

The belt of moonlight, grown a little narrower, still lay upon the outer

edge of the terrace, and upon the avenue that ran white and smooth before the château, curving slowly to lose itself amid the gloomy firs beyond. The yellow glare over the tree-tops to the east was gone, but from the same direction came a faint, incessant roar, like the beating of surf against a rocky headland very far away, and with the roar a muttering volley of sharper sounds that might have been distant shots.

Presently a man came running up the avenue, staggering a little as he ran, and making slow way. He came into the stretch of moonlight, and labored up to the edge of the high terrace, where he clung gasping for breath. He had a flesh wound on the forehead, from which the blood had streamed down over his face, black and ghastly in the moonlight, and one arm hung limp by his side.

"Monseigneur, monseigneur!" he cried, "they are at the gate! They batter it with a log. Three of us they have wounded, and there are but a dozen more. They will be here in a little moment! Oh, save yourself, monseigneur, save yourself!" And from the east there came the sound of a crash made very faint by distance, and a mounting roar of voices and of shots.

Then a very strange and wonderful thing happened. Out of the deep encircling gloom to the west of the château a great presence appeared, a horse and rider, huge, white in every part, ghostly. The horse was in the trappings of a bygone century, and the rider in quaint and ancient armor. They came very slowly down the moonlit avenue and past the terrace, and as they came a sudden wind arose, cold and damp, and wailed in the tree-tops. The horse's hoofs seemed to make no sound as they fell, nor was there any clank of armor or rattle of chain.

The Duc d'Angoulesme fell back a step, crossing himself and drawing his breath in swift gasps.

"Gilles Cœur de Lion!" he cried under his breath. "Gilles Cœur de

Lion!" and prayed aloud with trembling lips. The wounded fellow below the balustrade had fallen flat on his face in the dust with one hoarse cry of terror.

The great white horse with his silent rider moved slowly down the drive, and halted midway between the terrace and the gloomy row of firs, where the road lost itself in shadow. The moonlight lay upon the white armor and upon the horse's still flanks with a misty radiance. To the two standing upon the terrace this mist seemed sometimes quite to hide both horse and rider, drifting about them in ghostly veils. And always the cold wind moaned and shrilled in the tree-tops.

The noise from the eastward came nearer and nearer. At first it was broken and irregular like the yelping of a pack of hounds, but after a time it settled into a certain rhythmic cadence, and one knew that the men were marching up the long road in step and singing. They sang, discordantly, hoarse and shrill, an old song, but with new and terrible words. All France heard the song a little later.

The night was very still; there was no sound save that strange, cold wind that cried in the tree-tops and the dreadful song bore far ahead of the singers—that, and the heavy tread of many feet. It seemed to the two who stood by the marble balustrade of the south terrace, and to the huddled throng of servants behind them, that the mob would never appear.

Then at last, as they rounded the last great turn of the avenue, the battle chant rang forth with a sudden hoarse swell, as if a door had all at once been opened between the singers and those who heard, and the vanguard broke from the gloom of the fir trees into the moonlight.

The tall white horse tossed his head two or three times up and down, and his ghostly rider silently lowered the great lance from its rest and couched it. The wind in the

tree-tops screamed all at once like a lost soul, and blew a great cloud of dust from the dry white road, and whirled it round and round the still, strange presence that sat in guard of Château Hautcœur.

The vanguard of drunken and crazed peasants halted in its tracks, halted as if it had come face to face with a wall, and those men who were behind and still in the gloom of the fir trees fell stumbling against the first. The battle song died into silence in a queer, diminishing wave, as those who sang came rank by rank into sight of what stood in the moonlight.

For an instant there was a silence, on which came the sobbing hiss of scores of quick-drawn breaths. The white horse tossed his head once more, and those men who faced him told their children and their grandchildren, many years after, that he was three times the height of any living horse, and that flame came red and blue from his nostrils, with a great smell of sulphur. They said that through the ghostly armor of the silent knight, woven of moonbeams, the mighty skeleton of Gilles Cœur de Lion showed, and that his eyes burned with a fire no man might withstand, while that cold, awful wind shrieked and quavered about his head.

Then, all at once, a wail of utter terror, hoarse and desperate, began among those who stood nearest, and spread to a mad shriek from more than a hundred throats. The men who would have burned Château Hautcœur and slain their duke turned as one, and ran, fighting one another for way—all but a few, who had fainted quite away for sheer horror, and lay on their faces in the dust, under a litter of hay-forks and sickles and rusty cutlasses and broken muskets. And even these, coming partially to their senses, after a little, struggled to their feet, and seeing that dreadful thing still before them in the moonlight, ran madly after their fellows, sobbing and cursing and praying as they went.

Finally, when the last far-off wail of deadly fear had died away to the eastward, and there was no sound save the stirring of the wind in the trees, the white knight set his lance again in rest on the stirrup, and, turning his horse, rode slowly back to the steps of the terrace and swung to the ground.

Then the Duc d'Angoulesme began to laugh, but it was a nervous, sobbing laugh.

"Name of God!" said he, "it is that Henri! There is no man w'at deesmount jus' like Henri—an' I 'ave theenk it was Gilles Cœur de Lion! Name of God!"

The spirit of the first duke came up the steps of the terrace, his armor clanking unmistakably this time, and dropped on one knee before the sixteenth.

"Monseigneur," said he, very humbly, through his square white beard, "I have done a great wrong. I stole the silver armor of Gilles Cœur de Lion to put on myself, and the trappings of his charger to put on old Blancenez. Am I forgiven, monseigneur? The peasants—they are gone."

But the sixteenth duke raised the old man to his feet and put his two arms about the mailed shoulders.

"'Forgiven?'" he cried, and his eyes were very bright and his cheeks flushed. "'Forgiven?' Good old

friend! everything I have I owe to you, and everything I ever shall have. Oh, 'forgiven!' Henri, Henri, you have saved us all! There is no peasant in all Angoulesme will dare set foot within the walls of Château Hautcœur for ten years. Wait and see! Henri, by my faith, you shall die a knight. But tell me, first, how did you cause the sound of the wind?"

"I did not cause it, monseigneur," said the Breton. "The good God, He caused it. It is the wind that comes before a rain, monseigneur. Look to the south; the clouds are coming. In a few minutes it will rain very hard."

Then, when the old man had gone away, laughing proudly and grimly under his silver helmet, the duke turned to his duchess. She stood at a little distance, resting against the tiny table with its glasses and decanters of liqueurs. Her hands were clasped at her breast, and upon her white face a smile grew, slow and wondering, as if she could not yet quite understand that death had been snatched away and a golden life set in its place. The duke held out his arms.

"Oh, lovelies!" he cried, in a shaking whisper, "oh, braves' in all the worl'! Not bittaire fruit, *ma reine*; sweet, oh, sweet!"



POOR BRUTE!

HEAVYWEIGHT (*in riding togs*)—I tell you, horseback riding is a great thing for reducing the flesh.

FRIEND—You don't seem to be much thinner.

HEAVYWEIGHT—No; but you ought to see the horse!



BLOWING IN TEN CENTS

BENHAM—I spent a dime to-day trying one of those lung-testing machines.

MRS. BENHAM—Is that what you mean by blowing in your money?

LATE LOVE

TENTED in twilight the far highway led,
 Reaches of tawny emptiness and starkness—
 Lines of long levels to long levels fled,
 Lifeless the sky, the dull horizon dead,
 Only at last a night's sleep and a bed,
 Dreams, it may be, and darkness.

No smiling hostelry along the way
 Bade happy pause with welcoming insistence;
 No well-head bubbled, no veiled landscape lay
 Purple, alluring—but the ashen day
 Hung like a pall, interminably gray,
 Over the viewless distance.

Then while all hopes, all joys are, like the streams,
 Lost in the desert sands, serenely, slowly,
 A faint wind sighs around him, and it seems,
 Far off, airs quiver over watery gleams,
 And odors blow as if from flowers in dreams,
 From asphodel and moly.

And suddenly, in a great sacred hush,
 About him soft a world of green boughs closes,
 And velvet petals fall, and fountains gush,
 And tremulous his soul and senses flush,
 Till peace comes with deep mosses all a-crush,
 And nightingales and roses.

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD.



A RECORD

“H AVE you made a record with your automobile yet?”
 “Oh, yes; two dogs, a chicken, three small boys and a street-cleaner,
 all run over in less than an hour!”



IN CONFIDENCE

CUSTOMER—Waiter, here's a quarter. Suggest a good dinner for me.
 WAITER (*in a whisper*)—Go to some other restaurant, sir.

MR. SHAKESPEARE AT SCHOOL

A SHORT PLAY FOR WOMEN

By Caroline Duer

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MISS TUCKER, *the school-mistress.*
MIRANDA SMITH, *engaged; revisiting school.*
ANNE ROBINSON,
ROSALIE BROWN,
JESSIE JONES,
LYDIA JOHNSTONE,
NANCY BELL,
HESTER MILLER,
ELIZA GREEN,
A HOUSEMAID.

} *School-girls.*

SCENE—*The school-room of Miss TUCKER'S "Academy for Young Ladies," of a Saturday afternoon. There is a curtained archway, leading to a small inner room, in the middle of the back wall, and a practical window on each side of the archway. A door in the middle of the right side wall, with a tall cabinet standing near it. A door in the middle of the left, with a huge blackboard between it and the window. Maps and photographs of Greek and Roman ruins hang about. In the centre of the stage is a square platform on which stand Miss TUCKER'S desk and a revolving chair. Rows of desks and chairs (the chair-backs toward the audience) face the desk, but a wide passage-way is left free from it to the footlights.*

When the curtain rises MIRANDA SMITH and ANNE ROBINSON are seated, side by side, on the edge of the platform, facing the audience. MIRANDA, who, after some months of society, is visiting her old school-fellows again, has on a very elaborate outdoor costume. ANNE is more simply dressed. They lean against the desk, eating doughnuts out of a paper bag and exchanging confidences.

ANNE (*holding out the bag*)—And so,

my dear, when you wrote you were coming to-day, I sent home for these at once, for I know you used to love them.

MIRANDA (*picking out a fat doughnut*)—And so I do still, just as much as ever. Do you remember last Winter, how we used to walk up and down the long parlor during recess, talking and eating? One day we ate a dozen between us.

ANNE (*dreamily*)—How good they were! I ate five and you ate seven, I remember.

MIRANDA (*indignantly*)—No such thing, my dear! I remember perfectly. You ate seven and I—

ANNE—Why, Miranda! I've got it down in my diary!

MIRANDA (*vanquished*)—Oh, well, you had to have the doctor, anyhow, so it seems as if it might have been you. It was just about this time, I know, for I used to study my part in the play as I sat beside your bed. What are you going to have this year? And who's in it? I would not miss it for the world.

ANNE—Oh, Shakespeare! Miss Tucker thinks he's so improving, and we like to gratify her when we can. Be-

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sides, there are lots of *men* in Shakespeare, and the girls have gone mad on the subject of men ever since they heard you were engaged. They say school never seemed so tame, and they must do something unusual. Perhaps they'll let you see the rehearsal this afternoon.

MIRANDA—"Perhaps!"—why, of course they will. That's what I came for. And I can tell you it's not so easy for an engaged woman to find a free day.

ANNE (*enviously*)—I declare, Miranda, it seems quite absurd to think of you who have so lately left school as already settled in life.

MIRANDA (*absently turning the ring on her finger*)—No more absurd than it seems to me to think of you all, girls of my own age, studying away here, while I, as a married woman, am enjoying the gaieties of the season.

ANNE (*ruffled*)—Oh, come, my dear! you aren't married yet!

MIRANDA (*drawlingly*)—I almost feel as if I were. I have had so much attention since I've been engaged.

ANNE (*biting her doughnut*)—When did he propose?

MIRANDA (*surveying the place she has bitten in hers*)—About a week ago. He spoke to papa first.

ANNE (*indignantly*)—Pshaw! How uninteresting!

MIRANDA (*with emphasis*)—The next day he spoke to me.

ANNE (*excitedly, nestling close to her*)—What did he say, 'Randa? Tell me the very words. You know we always promised to tell each other the terms in which any man who wanted to propose did propose.

MIRANDA *glances at her shyly, laughs, and bites her doughnut again. ANNE glances back, laughs, and bites hers. They compare bites.*

MIRANDA—Well—we were at the Wild West Show—Buffalo Bill, you know.

ANNE (*eagerly*)—Yes.

MIRANDA—And he—Phil Bently—admired—

ANNE—Yes.

MIRANDA—the woman who's such a wonderful shot.

ANNE (*shaking her*)—You mock me, minx!

MIRANDA (*giggling and choking*)—Indeed, it began so—and I said, "I could run *twice* as fast if I were dressed like that;" and he said, "No, could you? You'd look ripping! I say—your daddy thinks it's all right—let's be married and spend the Winter at Aiken."

ANNE—Oh, Miranda! Just out like that! How splendid! (*They embrace.*) But he wasn't very subtle, was he?

MIRANDA (*severely*)—My dear, the one time you *don't* want a man to be subtle is when he's proposing to you. Well, when I said "yes," he took my hand and held it tight a minute, and he said: "That's awfully good of you, old girl. What kind of a ring shall I get you?" Imagine my agitation, Anne.

ANNE (*swaying about in an ecstasy*)—But in the midst of it you chose rubies and diamonds! Oh, Miranda, how fortunate that you had your wits about you! (*They embrace again. A pause. Each nibbles her doughnut.*)

ANNE (*with some embarrassment*)—How did he—no—when did he—I mean *did* he kiss you, Miranda? (*MIRANDA nods violently.*) Where?

MIRANDA—There! (*Points to her hand.*) And there! (*Points to her cheek.*)

ANNE (*giggling*)—I didn't mean that, silly! I meant—where were you?

MIRANDA—Oh, we were in the—in the carriage, and papa was putting the latch-key in the door.

ANNE (*better satisfied, but still curious*)—Oh—was it—was it—*nice*, Miranda?

MIRANDA (*loftily*)—The experience was not without interest, Anne.

ANNE (*sighing*)—I wish I had something—of the same kind—to tell you, dear. (*They embrace.*)

Enter JESSIE JONES, book in hand, from the left, very prim.

JESSIE—I wonder, girls, that you can bear to sit there gossiping all the afternoon. The room is as hot as an oven, too—don't you notice it? I'll just open the windows for a moment.

(*She opens the windows and pulls back the curtains in the archway. LYDIA JOHNSTONE and NANCY BELL are exposed to view. It is evident from the attitudes of these young ladies that they have been listening. Their two chairs are drawn close to the curtain, the big book from which they have been studying hangs at arm's length between them; NANCY's head is inclined sideways. LYDIA stares straight in front of her.*)

JESSIE—Well, if you two feel half as contemptible as you look you must be suffering tortures. If there's anything I hate, it's listening!

NANCY (*pleadingly*)—We couldn't help it, Jessie. Miranda was telling Anne how Mr. Bently proposed to her, and we *did* so want to hear, didn't we, Lydia?

LYDIA (*solemnly*)—We did, Nancy.

JESSIE (*sternly*)—What did you hear?

NANCY (*triumphantly*)—Everything! What she said, and what he said, and how he kissed—

JESSIE (*turning eagerly*)—Tell me, too, Miranda! (*They all sit—two on each side of MIRANDA on the platform.*)

Enter HESTER MILLER, book in hand, from the right, briskly.

HESTER—Upon my word, girls, it's impossible to do any sort of work while you are chattering like magpies. Here it is next to the last rehearsal this afternoon, and I have to know my own part, and prompt you all besides. Good heavens! This room is like a barn! Who opened the windows? (*She shuts them.*) May I ask what you are all discussing?

ALL (*except MIRANDA*)—Miranda's engagement.

HESTER (*joining them*)—Oh, let me see your ring!

JESSIE (*decidedly*)—He has excellent taste.

NANCY (*wistfully*)—What is the color of his hair? We wanted to ask before, didn't we, Lydia?

LYDIA (*solemnly*)—We did, Nancy.

MIRANDA (*reproachfully*)—You never asked me that, Anne. His hair is dark.

JESSIE (*cautiously*)—I've always thought it might be easier to say "yes" to a dark-haired man.

HESTER (*laughing*)—I prefer red, myself; it shows energy.

ANNE—And I, yellow. I think it's more tender.

NANCY—We liked yellow, too, didn't we, Lydia?

LYDIA—We did, Nancy.

ANNE—Well, I don't care what color his hair is—I want to be engaged.

JESSIE (*primly*)—To a worthy man, with good taste.

HESTER—And enough money to support me.

NANCY—We thought we'd like somebody to make love to us, didn't we, Lydia?

LYDIA—We did, Nancy.

ALL (*sighing*)—Oh, dear!

Enter ROSALIE BROWN, book in hand, from the left, rather high and mighty.

ROSALIE—What is the matter? You all look so sad. Were the cream puffs sour again at luncheon?

ALL (*sighing*)—We want to be engaged.

ROSALIE (*joining them*)—So do I. What is it like, Miranda?

MIRANDA (*after some thought*)—It's like the curtain going up at the matinee, all the time.

ALL (*sighing*)—Oh, dear!

ROSALIE—I don't see how you could bear to leave him and come up here.

MIRANDA—I wanted to see the play, you know.

ANNE (*jumping up*)—Bless me, we're all neglecting that play, and we ought to be rehearsing this minute! Here, move, girls! Miss Tucker's desk has got to be the balcony; and come on, Rosalie, you know you don't remember your lines. Begin at "But soft, what light—"

ROSALIE (*sulkily*)—I hate being Romeo.

HESTER (*briskly*)—Nonsense, Rosalie, you know you're the tallest girl here. It follows, naturally, that you have to play a man's part. Don't be ridiculous.

ANNE (*leaning over the desk*)—I'm sure I wish you were a real man. I'm several years older than Juliet was, and I don't think it's fair! Do go on, Rosalie! "But soft, what light——"

Enter ELIZA GREEN, book in hand, from right, studying intently.

ELIZA (*declaiming*)—"What are these, so withered and so wild in their attire?" No, I don't say that— Oh, here it is—"Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more: by Sinel's death I know I amthane of Glamis; but how of Cawdor?" (*Looks up.*) Oh, you are all here, are you? And Miranda, too! (*Greeting her warmly.*) Just engaged! Do let me see your ring! I congratulate you, dear, with all my heart. Isn't it beautiful? What is he like?

HESTER—Now, then, Eliza, if you want to make personal notes on the character of Miranda's fiancé, you must do it in the corner. "Romeo and Juliet's" just on.

ELIZA (*astonished*)—But I thought you said "Macbeth" came first.

HESTER (*busily turning the leaves of her book*)—That was before the witches said they wouldn't wear their noses. I think I'll have to put it at the other end now, and cut them off altogether.

MIRANDA (*utterly bewildered*)—"Macbeth!" Witches' noses! Are you all gone crazy?

HESTER—No, my dear; we're having a Shakespeare revival. Anne and Rosalie do *Romeo and Juliet*; Nancy and Lydia, *Falstaff* and *Prince Hal*; Jessie and I, *Julius Cæsar* and *Mark Antony*; and Eliza, *Macbeth*. Just now the trouble is that the three wretched day-scholars, who promised to be the witches, say they won't wear their noses, so I suppose we'll have to do without them. And now, if you please, girls, we'll begin. Go on, Rosalie—"He jests at scars—" (*Rosalie approaches the platform. ANNE leans on the desk, the other girls group themselves to right and left, listening.*)

ROSALIE—"He jests at scars that never felt a wound—that never felt a wound—" What comes next, Hester? Gracious! My stocking's coming down.

HESTER—Never mind it. (*Reading.*) "*Juliet* appears above at a window." Appear, Anne! Now, Rosalie, "But soft——"

ROSALIE (*feeling at her knee*)—"But soft—" I believe the elastic is broken, and I only bought them yesterday. "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun! Arise, fair sun—" She ought to get up, there, oughtn't she, Hester?

ANNE—I don't see why.

ROSALIE—Well, I don't know, except that when I say, "Arise, fair sun," it seems to me something ought to happen; but I don't care. "Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, who is already sick and pale with grief that thou, her maid, art far more fair than she. Be not her maid, since she is envious: her vestal livery is but sick and green, and none but fools do wear it—" I don't think that sounds very polite—"cast it off. It is my lady; oh, it is my love! Oh, that she knew she were!—" Wait a minute. Don't tell me. I know what comes next, only I can't think. It's an awfully long speech.

ANNE (*impatiently*)—I should think it was, and I never know what to do while you're saying it. You might rehearse it alone. Let's get to the place where I come in. "O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?" Nobody who has once seen you in your doublet and hose will say *that*, my dear.

MIRANDA (*interrupting*)—Where did you get your costumes?

ANNE—We hired them. You ought to see the togas—Hester's and Jessie's; Jessie is so modest she had hers made as long as her skirt, and as for *Falstaff*! Get your boots and your figure, Nancy, do, and *Macbeth's* kilt. (*NANCY goes to the tall cabinet on the right and takes out an armful of properties, which she spreads on the desks. Each girl picks out her costume—JESSIE, a very long toga and purple mantle; ROSALIE, a pair of pale-blue silk tights, doublet, etc.; ELIZA, a Scotch kilt; NANCY, a leather jerkin, with a pillow to stuff it, a fierce*

mustache attached to a long nose, also an enormous pair of high boots.)

NANCY (*gravely*)—I'm not sure that the part suits me; but, you see, Lydia wanted to be *Prince Hal*—she always puts him down in birthday books as her favorite Shakespeare character—and so I had to be *Falstaff*. What do you think?

MIRANDA (*with equal gravity*)—I'd like to see you dressed.

NANCY—All right. Lydia, just clap these boots a bit out of the window. They are awfully dusty. I'd like to know whether you think I look fierce enough. (*LYDIA obediently takes the boots.*)

HESTER (*remonstrating*)—Now, then, Nancy, this isn't a dress rehearsal—and anyhow, it isn't your turn. If Rosalie will kindly go on, it *may* get to be your turn before bedtime; but if she doesn't—

ROSALIE (*nettled*)—See here, Hester, I didn't join in this play to be hectored—

HESTER—I don't know *why* you joined, but I know you'll be a dead failure if you don't learn your lines.

ROSALIE (*throwing down the blue tights*)—That settles it. I didn't want to be *Romeo*, and now I won't be. (*All the girls surround her, explaining, expostulating.*)

JESSIE—But she didn't mean—

ELIZA—You'll look so lovely in that blue doublet—

NANCY—And the *rest*, you know—

ANNE—And I *must* have someone to make love to me—

ROSALIE (*haughtily*)—Oh, don't try to persuade me. I should only be a "dead failure." (*She detaches herself from them and goes to sit down in a corner, right. They all follow. A sudden scream from LYDIA, who has been dusting the boots at the window, left, startles everybody.*)

HESTER—She's dropped *Falstaff's* boots into the yard.

NANCY—You didn't!

LYDIA—I did, Nancy.

NANCY (*severely*)—Then go down at once and get them! Go down the back way. Don't let *anyone* see you. You

know we want our costumes to be a complete surprise to Miss Tucker. (*LYDIA obediently departs, right.*)

HESTER (*ironically*)—And during the absence of *Prince Hal* and the temporary indisposition of *Romeo*, shall we go on with "Macbeth" or with "Julius Cæsar"?

ELIZA and JESSIE (*together*)—I wish you'd just hear me this speech:

MACBETH

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here.

CÆSAR

I could be well mov'd if I were as you;
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me:
But I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.

HESTER—Girls! Girls! One at a time. Let me see. As long as the witches aren't here, I think we'll skip "Macbeth" to-day. And Jessie, you know your lines all right; let's begin where you're a corpse and I'm doing the oration.

ELIZA (*deeply offended, throwing down her kilt*)—That's the third time this week I've been skipped, and I won't stand it. "Macbeth" is just as important as anything else, and if it can't be rehearsed it sha'n't be acted. (*Except ROSALIE, who sits by herself, sulking, all the girls surround her, explaining, expostulating.*)

JESSIE—She doesn't mean—

MIRANDA—The kilt is so becoming—

ANNE—And you look so manly—

ELIZA—Oh, don't say any more. It doesn't matter. I don't care to act. (*She detaches herself from them and goes to sit down in a corner, left. They all follow.*)

Enter LYDIA, right, covered with snow.

NANCY (*eagerly*)—Did you get the boots, Lydia? Did anyone see you?

LYDIA (*meekly*)—Only cook, Nancy.

She had to brush me off a little before I came up-stairs. (*She produces the boots full of snow, and sets them on the floor.*)

NANCY (*emptying them out*)—All right! Now we'll do our part, Hester; it's awfully short.

HESTER—You're not going to put on your costume!

NANCY (*sitting down and beginning to put on a boot*)—Yes, I am. I said I would, to show Miranda, and anyhow I can't do *Falstaff* in petticoats; it makes me shy.

HESTER (*remonstrating*)—No, there won't be time. You're putting everything back, Nancy.

NANCY (*firmly*)—Then you and Jessie can go on with the funeral, while we dress.

HESTER (*shrugging her shoulders*)—Very well, only you'll have to stop long enough to help carry on *Cæsar's* body.

JESSIE—And I hope you'll be more careful than you were the last time. I've got a bump the size of a walnut on the back of my head where you dropped me.

NANCY (*indignantly*)—That wasn't our fault. It was the day-scholars who were playing the Roman populace.

JESSIE—I don't care whose fault it was; I don't want it to happen again, that's all.

HESTER—Oh, don't be so fussy, Jessie. We'll never get on with the rehearsal. Now, citizens—that is, such of you as are on terms with me—will you please attend to business? (*ANNE, LYDIA and NANCY respond. ROSALIE, right, and ELIZA, left, do not move.*)

HESTER (*surveying them*)—It's impossible, you know, for three citizens to carry *Cæsar*. No, Miranda, don't move. You've got to be audience, and tell me how my voice carries. We'll leave out the carrying of the corpse. It's just got to be there. Lie down, Jessie. (*JESSIE lies uneasily on the edge of the platform, while HESTER stands gloomily looking down at her.*) And begin, Anne.

ANNE—"Stay ho! and let us hear Mark Antony."

LYDIA (*after much prompting from NANCY*)—"Let him go up into the public chair; we'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up."

HESTER—"For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you." (*She goes up on the platform.*)

NANCY—"What does he say of Brutus?"

ANNE—"He says for Brutus' sake, he finds himself beholding to us all."

NANCY—"Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here."

ANNE—"This *Cæsar* was a tyrant."

LYDIA (*after being prompted as before*)—"Nay, that's certain; we are blest that Rome is quit of him."

ANNE—"Rid of him"—not "quit."

NANCY—I know it's "quit." I taught Lydia that only to-day.

ANNE—Well, you taught her wrong.

NANCY—Really, Anne, I suppose I can read as well as you.

ANNE—I'll get the book.

JESSIE (*sitting up suddenly*)—I'm not going to stay here all night while you dispute. It's exceedingly uncomfortable.

ALL—Oh, Jessie! Lie down; you're spoiling it all.

JESSIE—Very well, then; stop fighting and go on with the funeral.

LYDIA (*going off like a mechanical toy*)—"Peace! let us hear what Antony can say!"

HESTER—"You gentle Romans——"

ALL (*together, loudly*)—"Peace, ho! let us hear him."

HESTER (*stepping forward*)—

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;

I come to bury *Cæsar*, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with *Cæsar*.

(*Pauses impressively.*)

JESSIE—That's the second time you've stepped on me. I wish you'd be careful.

HESTER (*with a gesture of despair*)—Oh, Jessie, you do put one out so.

NANCY—Well, now that you are put out, may Lydia and I go and dress?

HESTER—No, you mayn't. You are Roman citizens, and I'm talking to you, and you have to stay to be talked to.

NANCY—Then we sha'n't have time to dress—

HESTER (*impatiently*)—That doesn't matter. I never knew anybody so set upon making a guy of herself as you, Nancy.

NANCY (*offended, throwing down the boots*)—Upon my word, Hester, I think you are very unkind. You know I never wanted to be *Falstaff*. I did it only to oblige Lydia. And if I'm making a guy of myself I—I certainly sha'n't play it. And Lydia won't play *Prince Hal*. (*She walks forward, followed by the others.*)

ANNE—But, Nancy, she didn't mean it like that—

MIRANDA—Everybody thinks it's so good-natured of you to be willing to take such a—such a difficult part.

HESTER (*deigning to propitiate*)—Nobody can deny that Nancy is prettier as Nancy than she will be as *Falstaff*.

MIRANDA (*patting her shoulder*)—Which makes it all the nicer of her to be so conscientious.

NANCY (*still hurt*)—It does seem a pity to waste the boots—but I don't want to play now.

JESSIE (*suddenly, sitting up*)—It seems to me that there is nobody left in this Shakespeare revival but Hester and me—unless you count *Juliet*, minus a *Romeo*. I'm afraid Miss Tucker will be awfully disappointed.

MIRANDA (*eagerly*)—And all the people who were coming to see it. When I think how lovely Rosalie would have looked in those blue—that blue costume, and how well the kilts became Eliza! Personal appearance has so much to do with success in this world! Why, I believe it was just the thought of seeing me dressed like the wonderful sharp-shooter that made Phil Bently propose to me.

ROSALIE and ELIZA (*facing round at the same minute*)—If you think Miss Tucker would be disappointed, we'll act.

MIRANDA—That's right—and I'm sure Nancy will, too.

JESSIE (*lying down again*)—Then for goodness' sake let us get on with "Julius Cæsar"! My back is nearly broken. (*The citizens assemble again, and HESTER continues.*)

HESTER—

The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—

ELIZA (*breaking in*)—Am I *Brutus*?

HESTER (*tartly*)—No, you're not. *Brutus* isn't on the stage.

ELIZA—Well, I didn't know.

HESTER—You shouldn't interrupt.

ELIZA—But if I *had* been *Brutus* I ought to have looked haughty or something when you said that.

HESTER—You may look as you please. You are only a citizen. (*Continues.*)

Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honorable man;
So are they all, all honorable men—
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.

A pause. Some noise without makes them all listen. NANCY goes to the door, right.

NANCY (*in stage whisper*)—It's Miss Tucker! Hide the costumes. (*They gather up everything in haste and thrust togas, mantles, kilts, doublet, jerkin, mask, etc., into cabinet, right. The door will not shut. They plant MISS LYDIA against it. FALSTAFF's boots are almost forgotten, but MIRANDA puts them behind the curtain of the archway.*)

Enter MISS TUCKER, with a letter in her hand.

MISS TUCKER (*tall, stately, severe, crossing the room*)—Young ladies, I regret exceedingly to inform you—How do you do, my dear Miranda? (*stopping to shake hands with her.*) It is a happiness, indeed, to see you again and know that you are about to be so pleasantly and, I may say, prudently established in life! As I was about to remark, young ladies (*mounting the platform*), a very painful thing has occurred. This letter,

which was dropped—(at these words every girl's hand goes to her pocket, except MIRANDA's, which pats the front of her gown)—on the stairs, has been found by me. The contents I blushed to read, but when I mention that it appears to be what I believe is called a "love letter" of a somewhat ardent description, even the most thoughtless among you will perceive that I cannot pass over the matter in silence.

LYDIA (pleadingly, from her station by cabinet)—Not even on a holiday, Miss Tucker?

MISS TUCKER (with an awful glare)—I am at a loss to understand you, Miss Johnstone! I await an explanation, young ladies!

ANNE, ROSALIE and ELIZA (aside)—Say it's yours, Miranda!

MIRANDA (touching the front of her dress)—But I don't think it is; I am sure I can feel mine here.

JESSIE, NANCY and HESTER (aside)—You're the only one who can own it. Speak up!

MIRANDA (heroically)—Could it be—be meant for me—be mine, Miss Tucker?

MISS TUCKER—My dear Miranda, with every desire to accept so legitimate a solution of the mystery, I must decline to believe that a casual visitor at the school would be likely to drop a letter on the back stairs. No; the offender lives among us, and whoever she is, so abandoned as to be carrying on a correspondence of this nature, let her speak now, and speak frankly. (A dead silence follows. All look furtively at LYDIA, who appears unconscious.) If there is any girl here who believes that, without encouragement on her part, such a letter might have been addressed to her, let her hold up her hand. (All the hands go up.) Young ladies, you surprise me!

ANNE—Well, Miss Tucker, we'd be less than human if we didn't think that some day some man would write us some such kind of letter.

MISS TUCKER—Your levity is most repulsive, Miss Robinson.

HESTER—It wouldn't be our fault, you know, Miss Tucker.

ELIZA—No. Why, it's even possible that a man might, once, quite hopelessly, of course, have addressed such words to—to you, Miss Tucker.

MISS TUCKER (with an awful look)—To me, Miss Green! Do you know what you are saying?

ROSALIE—It would not have—have been your fault, Miss Tucker.

NANCY (hastily)—It would just be his misfortune.

MISS TUCKER—It would indeed be a misfortune if any young man had seen fit to address me, at any time, in such terms as these.

MIRANDA (anxiously)—How does it begin? Couldn't you read it to us, Miss Tucker?

MISS TUCKER (putting on her eyeglasses)—I have not, myself, fully mastered the contents. Ahem! (All, except LYDIA, stand in semicircle around her. MISS TUCKER holds letter at arm's length.) "My Buxom Bride—"

ALL (in audible aside, much relieved)—Oh, that's not—Phil, Jack, Tom, Dick, Harry, Bob, Reggie, Lionel.

MIRANDA (affectedly)—If you knew how relieved I am!

ALL (earnestly)—Yes, indeed, I don't wonder.

MISS TUCKER (continuing)—"My Buxom Bride: You are easily Queen of the Fairies—" a slight flavor of Spenser here, I notice—"and the rations you sling when I swing for the dinner trip suit me down to the ground." A quotation from Kipling, I presume, entirely unintelligible to me. "We've been keeping company—" surely that expression does not obtain among the gilded youth of the day?—"keeping company these six months—" six months of this duplicity under my roof!—"and I'm afraid some other Johnnie—" his name, then, it appears is John—"some other Johnnie'll swipe my black-eyed Susan—" black-eyed Susan! a sobriquet, I suppose—"if I don't sit right down to business. Say when, and you can have me—"

(Breaks off)—I really think it unnecessary to go further. The letter speaks for itself. It only remains to find the person for whom it was intended. Well, has no one anything to say? (A pause.) Sit down, young ladies. (All, except LYDIA, sit; some on the right, some on the left, facing MISS TUCKER, who does not at first notice that anyone is missing.)

MISS TUCKER (addressing them impressively)—I am very much afraid there is more in this than meets the eye, and I should have been blind indeed if I had not noticed lately a disposition on your part to whisper in corners, to separate in a furtive, guilty way when approached by a teacher. *Something is going on. Yesterday, convinced that I heard a man's voice in the hall, I looked over the banisters and observed Miss Robinson and Miss Bell sneaking—I can use no other term—up-stairs with an enormous package. I forbore to question them. To-day, happening casually to glance into the yard, I beheld the deep imprint of feet, immense feet, in the snow beside the wall! Entering this room I find—May I ask what is the matter?* (She breaks off as an irrepressible giggle runs through the school-room, and turns to catch MIRANDA's finger pointed at the curtained archway. She perceives the boots, the toes of which protrude, and, rising majestically, walks toward the curtain, which she suddenly twitches aside.) What is this? (Greatly surprised, she stoops and picks up the boots.) Where is the owner of these—ahem! articles? (In her bewilderment she

thrusts her arm into one of them, and gets snow up her sleeve.)

HESTER (vainly trying to steady her voice)—It's—it's only a joke, Miss Tucker.

MISS TUCKER (grimly shaking her sleeve)—I hope it may prove so. Will you be good enough to tell me—? (Looking about, she catches NANCY making signs to LYDIA.) Ah, Miss Johnstone, will you have the kindness to leave that door and take your place among your companions?

LYDIA—I'm afraid I—I—can't, Miss Tucker.

MISS TUCKER (stupefied)—What?

LYDIA (stammering)—Th—th—they want me to stay here, f—f—for fear the door will fl—fl—fly open.

MISS TUCKER—The door will fly open! (She walks across the room.) Further concealment is impossible. Miss Johnstone, stand aside! (LYDIA half hesitates, MISS TUCKER plucks her away. The door bursts open and discloses FALSTAFF's fierce mask and bloated jerkin, apparently ready for a spring. MISS TUCKER staggers back)—Can I believe my eyes! Really—a man in the closet—at last!

CHORUS—It's only Falstaff, Miss Tucker! The Shakespeare revival, you know—our costumes! We meant to surprise you!

HOUSEMAID (at the door, right)—If you please, Miss Tucker, the cook says she'd like to leave this day week, and if you have quite finished with a letter of hers which you picked up on the stairs, she'd be glad to answer it right away.

CURTAIN.



EASILY ANSWERED

HEWITT—Is there any doubt about Gruet's honesty?

JEWETT—None at all—he's dishonest.



SOME people never really know what a contempt they have for society until they find themselves snubbed by it.

TWILIGHT SONG

DIPS the flaming disk of the sun
 Into the bosom of Lebanon;
 Now that the blossoms of twilight fail,
 Hark to the nightingale!

Sinks to silence the clash and jar
 In the heart of the great bazaar;
 Swiftly gathers a violet veil;
 Hark to the nightingale!

Up from the minaret's crest to the sky
 The late muezzin flings his cry
 To the earliest planet twinkling pale;
 Hark to the nightingale!

And deep in the gardens, where the scent
 Of the rose and the jasmine-flower is blent,
 The lovers turn from their whispered tale,
 And—hark to the nightingale!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



VASSARTY NOTE

PROFESSOR WING—Now that we have discussed the entire feathered kingdom, I wish you young ladies would tell me which one of all these birds you consider most important to the welfare of the human race?

THE CLASS (*in chorus*)—The stork.



IMPOSSIBLE

MRS. FIRMLY—Do you think it possible for a woman to belong to a reform club and do housework, too?

MRS. OWNMIND—Not and do justice to the club.



SOME girls are so circumspect they will not accompany a young man on the piano without a chaperon.

FACT AND FANCY

By May Kremer

IT was strange it should have happened this way; so different from anything they had thought of, so jarringly opposite, almost mocking.

She had planned to have him enter a ball-room and see her surrounded by the wittiest, handsomest—in fact, the best sort of men there—and hear her charm them with her brilliancy, and, finally, see her dance away, followed by admiring glances.

Or else, he might be passing through the Park and see her riding Rocket along the bridle-path. She often dwelt on this scene, and knew at just what angle she would hold her riding-whip, as she reined in and beckoned haughtily to him.

Or again, and to her credit, for she was not a vain girl, she liked best to think of him in her own home. They would stand before the library fire, she in a gown of soft, clinging material—which she would have made for the occasion—he looking at her and smiling at her as of old. Everything would be quiet and cosy; they would sit talking in the red glow of the fire-light and be happy—she felt quite carried away merely thinking of this happiness.

And he—well, beyond the hope that she might see him charging at the head of his company of cavalry, beyond the hope that her cheek might flush with the same feeling of pride and ecstasy that would be his at such a moment, he did not care how or where they met. He was an Englishman and somewhat unimaginative. Still, he felt he should like her to see that charge, he leading.

Sometimes he dreamed of this, waking up with a wild nervousness that made further sleep impossible.

So it was very cruel, after such careful planning, that they should meet one cold Winter day near Madison Square, both hurrying, heads bent against the wind, and—alas! for the dreams of ball-room and battle-field—both carrying most unromantic-looking bundles.

Each greeted the other warmly, with smiles of glad surprise, for they were sincere young people, feeling no necessity of social reserve.

They walked in silence a long, long time; and when, at last, she spoke, the witty young girl of the ball-room swooned and died. Painful to relate, her words bordered strangely on the commonplace.

"I have been buying an album for my stamp-collection," he said, exhibiting his bundle. The picture of the gallant captain, charging with uplifted sabre, suddenly crumbled to bits beside the brilliant girl of the ball-room.

"And I," she answered, "have invested in some worsted to knit golf-stockings." At these words the figure of the dashing young Amazon fell into a shapeless ruin, and as her heavy golf-skirt blew out merrily in the breeze, the image of the girl in the gown of soft, clinging material—an image that had fought so hard for life—waved its hands half sadly, half mockingly, and glided slowly away to join the others.

"I will come this evening, if I may," he said, tenderly, as he rang the bell for her later in the afternoon. "And

then I can ask you what I came so far to ask—what you would not let me ask last Summer, fearing I might change. I have not changed."

Saying this with all the sincerity of his fresh, strong manhood, she admired him far more—alas, for the faded vision!—than if she had seen him charging with his company.

"I never thought I should meet you this way," she said, irrationally. "I often dreamed of our meeting, and filled it with romantic details. It's a way girls have," she added,

apologetically. "But," she continued, a beautiful color coming into her face, "now I know it was just seeing you that mattered; the where, when or how was mere incident."

He clasped her white, woolly-gloved hand. "Don't tempt me to kiss you right here on the doorstep," he said, threateningly.

"Why, you're coming on!" she cried, roguishly. And, at this dreadful speech, even the dust of those poor ruined visions flew away.



THE KISSING BUGBEAR

"IS there really any danger
In a kiss?" he softly sighed,
Little planning any plot.
"Wait—I'll to the stairs and listen,
And find out," she quick replied,
"Whether papa sleeps or not."



FORCE OF HABIT

MISTRESS—Now, Bridget, how often have I cautioned you against breaking the ninth commandment?

BRIDGET—Indade, mum, an' I guess it must 'a' been the cat done it.



"WHO is that man dancing with Emily?"
"I don't know, I'm sure. Emily renews her youth so often I can't keep track of them."



FOXY EDITOR

ISABEL—I think that editor man is simply horrid!

JUDITH—Why?

ISABEL—He placed the engagement announcement of myself to young Sloppington under the head of "Business Opportunities."

A GIRL'S HYMN TO DAPHNE

By Josephine Preston Peabody

IMMORTAL Maiden,
Now that the horns of Springtime réveillé
Blow—blow Uprising, and all things that be
Wake happy, and with tenfold laughter laden,
The brooks break free!

I pray thee, hearken
Unto the little singing from a place
Where love has ever dreamed upon thy face,
And seemed, when forest sanctuaries darken,
To feel that grace.

I know thou livest:
I who have felt thy nearness in the wood—
Uncurious presences of maidenhood,
All ways of dim endearment that thou givest
The solitude.

And soon, wing-fluttered,
Shall the bare silence of the earth be wound
With melody and murmur and soft sound,
And in that breath of being, gladly uttered,
Rich tongues abound.

Yes, for our wonder,
Fathoms of inland green, deep tree on tree,
Reared with the winds, shall send up fitfully
Bright notes, as bubbles flicker up from under
Green depth of sea.

While men are saying:
The Earth speaks forth at last—reply and call,
Showers the terrestrial secret now, withal!—
The vernal rain, sun and blooms of a Maying—
Gives all, and all!

But while a greeting
Stirs in the bough and quickens in the nest,
While the green harp-strings prelude to the guest,
I hear aerial laughter soft retreating,
That none molest!

THE SMART SET

Oh, loving kindness
 Of cloistering leaves alert, and gentle swarm
 Of sun-pied shadows, veil on veil, transform
 The covert, where so near to human blindness,
 Thy heart beats warm!

Wild heart, leaf-hidden!
 Veiled with the green quiescence of a tree,
 Too well I love thy joy of mystery
 To tell the grace, or sing with lips unbidden
 The way to thee.

Nay, breathing token,
 Uncaptured fairness, laughter of the air,
 I bless thee for thy loyal heed to share
 A soul and sanctuary yet unbroken,
 With all things fair.

Forgetful never!
 Whether in amber-shut oblivion
 The buds see naught but Summer, in the sun,
 Or vainly at her feet, entreating ever,
 The last leaves run.

And whether darken
 Wood aisles beneath some oracle and boon
 Of thronging rest, while to a world-old rune
 The spell-bound creatures of the midnight hearken
 The holy Moon.

Or whether flushes
 The drenched new rose of dawning, rose supreme,
 Shedding dim gift on hill and field and stream,
 To fill that hour of pallors and of hushes
 With morning dream;

Until the golden
 Lees of a daytime, sinking through the dense
 Pine-trees and cedars, steep with frankincense
 Meaning of wood and world, and new and olden,
 And soul with sense.

Fleet—fleet, untaken!
 One augury let fall for other donned,
 Unreachable—yet tender to respond
 With gleams that ever waken, sleep and waken,
 Beyond, beyond!

Oh, loyal dwelling
 Of tacit leaves and tendrils that demur,
 Mellow frank warble, call, and reedy chirr!
 Outspoken talkers all, but never telling
 The way to her!

Where shrined with yearning,
Gloomed with all mysteries that none can thrid,
Sister and sovereign of the chrysalid—
Her deepened eyes hold awe beyond discerning,
Beneath rapt lid.

The echoes hover
And hold their breath while the one Silence sings;
And bowered with thousand elemental wings,
She glimmers, with half-smiling lips shut over
Unwhispered things.

Ah, to have lowered
Arrogant brows—put back the hands that boast;
Girded about with all thy gentle host,
Triumphant over triumph of the froward,
Thou Innermost!

Dear Tears and Laughter
Of all solemnity, do thou assuage
The empty noise, the sacrilegious rage
Of this vain time, and summon us hereafter
A wiser age.

Dumb the gods' thunder
With thy intrepid loveliness of speech,
That he who comes to menace may beseech,
And bow hard eyes to worship and to wonder
Beyond his reach.

From their thick slumber
Dismay the purblind souls that, to possess,
Hound all that's hid, and crowd the wilderness,
Ready to measure, bound, interpret, number,
But never guess!

Sing, and awaken
The futile ones that seek—and never tire—
To tear the swan-song out to their desire;
And bring, elate, the dead wild fawn forsaken
Of the wild fire!

Oh, in thy keeping
Be the proud halo of the unseen pole;
With dreams, and wings, and echoes of the Whole;
And the unsounded fathoms that lie sleeping
In human soul.

Averted breathing
Of prayerful lips; the song without a shape;
Bloom of the distance, bloom of wayside grape;
Shadow and breeze and radiance, all bequeathing
Divine escape.

Aye, leaves of warning,
 Crown the song's triumph with thy intertwined
 Rebuke and tenderness, to bow the mind
 To revelations yet beyond the morning,
 Beyond the wind!

O Maiden Hearer,
 In thy green stronghold, circled veil on veil
 With all tranquillities, whose leaves exhale
 Beatitude and welcome ever dearer,
 Be hid: and Hail!



A POINT WELL TAKEN

IT was at the dinner-table, and the careworn father, who had not found the operations of the day wholly to his liking in a business way, had just begun to banish vexatious things and enjoy the comforts of home, when his little daughter, a tot of some nine Summers, addressed him.

"Papa, both brother and I will have to have new Spring suits, hats, gloves and shoes and everything."

FOND FATHER—My dear, neither you nor your brother seems to appreciate the fact that you are the children of poor parents.

TOT OF NINE—Humph! I don't see anything in that to appreciate!



AUTHORITATIVE

NODD—Have you ever seen a list of the most expensive places in the world to spend one's vacation in? Here it is.

TODD—Where did you get it?

"I merely asked my wife to jot down where she would like to go."



MRS. JONES—I don't see what she wanted to marry him for; he has a cork leg, a glass eye and false teeth.

MRS. SMITH—Well, my dear, you know women always did have a hankering after remnants.



DISQUALIFIED

"DO you want a position in my store?"

"Yes, sir; and I want to say that I am an honest man."

"You won't do; I want somebody to learn the business."

THE POWER OF WOMAN

By Henry Collins Walsh

“GOD is only seen through women,” says Castiglione; but on the other hand Victor Hugo ungallantly remarks: “Dolls are the playthings of children, children the playthings of men, men the playthings of women, and women the playthings of the devil.” Both these distinguished gentlemen, however, pay in different ways their tribute to the power of the eternal feminine. Truly, from her throne of beauty, woman has ruled the world, and whether she has brought “airs from heaven or blasts from hell,” whether her influence has been exerted for good or evil, none can deny the remarkable force of that influence.

What is the source of this power? Go ask the Sphinx who broods over the world! Beauty is certainly a potent factor, for how the beautiful women, from Helen of Troy to Mary Stuart, look out from the mist of centuries with their velvety eyes, and even now hold us with their charm! It is Helen of Troy whose memory fascinates even the learned Dr. Faustus, and her possession is one of the delights that he pawns his soul for.

That is a fine touch of nature in the Iliad, when Homer describes the old men sitting like grasshoppers on the walls of Troy, who, when they spy Helen below, robed in her marvelous beauty, at once fall to whispering among themselves, saying that it was no wonder both Greeks and Trojans should war over such loveliness, and that they could not be blamed. Old men they were, and wise in council, but still they bowed their venerable heads to the power of beauty. Yet

we must all recognize that it is not beauty alone which is the source of woman's charm and power. Wit, sympathy, magnetism, call it what you will; these, if added to sensuous beauty, form an exceptional combination, and even when beauty is left out, with these there is extraordinary power still. Plain women, and many of them, have held potent sway, but witless beauty has never had a very wide influence; something more than the senses must be touched.

Doubtless Delilah had a psychic influence over Samson when she lulled him to sleep and deprived him of his locks and strength. And Judith, too, was doubtless possessed of personal magnetism, to whom Holofernes lost not only his heart but his head.

Aspasia, we are told, had no beauty; she may or may not have been as infamous as her foes have been pleased to paint her, but what extraordinary influence, what wonderful power was hers! She held Pericles in her sway, and taught him rhetoric and eloquence. Socrates himself was indebted to her for instructions in philosophy. Her house was the resort of the most brilliant men of Athens; besides Pericles and Socrates, there came to it almost as disciples Phidias, Anaxagoras, Xenophon, Sophocles and Euripides, and many more less distinguished. Hers indeed was the precursor of the salons dominated by women, and it was probably Aspasia who first agitated the woman question in Athens, the modern theory of equal education of the sexes, later taken up and advocated by Plato in his “Republic.” Socrates advised fathers to send their sons to As-

pasia to be educated. She attracted through force of intellect, and through sympathy and the understanding of the aspirations of men. Plutarch speaks of the wonderful affection that Pericles had for her, and as a proof of her rare powers he relates that, after the death of Pericles, she took up with a common man, ignorant and vulgar; but he rose, under her influence and instruction, to be one of the foremost men of the state.

Yet this woman of Miletus had no standing before the law; she was one of the *hetairai*, or "stranger women," as they were called. These came to Athens and to most of the Greek towns from the Greek colonies in Asia Minor, and by their accomplishments and sympathy with the pursuits and aspirations of intellectual men they became the real companions of the leaders in thought and art and war. These women had great influence upon the lives of men, shared their intellectual pleasures, and had vast weight in public affairs.

The Greeks, who, in regions of politics, philosophy, literature and art climbed to Alpine heights, left their wives in the dreary valleys of domestic drudgery. As they could find but little companionship in the minds of the women whose mental growth they had stunted, they sought the companionship of the stranger women. From this social reaction arose that brilliant constellation of *hetairai* who, by the relations in which they stood to the greatest men of the day, exerted so wide an influence upon their age that they are forever identified with the most renowned period of Greece.

The contempt with which wives were regarded in ancient Athens is well expressed in the saying of Pericles, that the best wife is she about whom the least is said, whether of good or evil. However, every rule has its exception, and if we go to our Plutarch we shall find that some of the Grecian heroes had exceptional wives, who possessed exceptional influence over their husbands. To buttress this fact the well-known jest of Themistocles may be re-

peated. He proved that his little son ruled Athens, for the boy ruled his mother, who ruled the ruler of the city.

In Sparta the women appear to have had a freer foot than in Athens, for there the maidens went abroad with faces uncovered, and only the married women used a veil; the former, according to the explanation of Charillos, designing to get themselves husbands, and the latter to keep them. But generally, throughout the rest of Greece, the women were kept in confinement, closely watched and guarded.

Still, the free accents of a Greek woman's voice ring down the ages and haunt the remains of a past literature with their beauty and power and passion. Of "burning Sappho," and of how she "loved and sang," almost nothing is known. The little that has come down about her life is so overlaid with the scandal of satirists, who wrote two centuries after her death, that it is difficult to winnow the grain from the chaff. It is known, however, that she was married and had a daughter named after her, and that she was early left a widow. Alcæus, the other great lyricist of the time, was a friend of hers. In the eleventh century her works were burned in Constantinople. All that is left is in mere fragments quoted by others, but sufficient to indicate the loss that literature sustained by the baleful fire which lighted the capital of the empire of the East.

Women played no active part in politics in Greece until the period of the Macedonian supremacy, when Olympias, mother of Alexander, helped to make history, if ever woman did. Her daughter, Cleopatra—not, of course, the famed "serpent of the Nile"—and Kynane and her daughter, Eurydice, were all women who exerted considerable political influence. These form a link between the women of old Greece and the queens of the eastern empire, such as Eudoxia and Theodora; Eudoxia, the great queen of Arcadius, who had him completely under her thumb, and whose celebrated quarrel with Chrysostom resulted in his banishment from Constantinople. Pul-

cheria, the daughter of Arcadius, succeeded to the crown, and for forty years ruled the empire, the first woman who sat on the throne of Constantinople.

A century later came the most famous of the Greek empresses, Theodora, wife of Justinian. She well exemplifies the power of beauty and wit and magnetism in woman. An actress, celebrated both for her beauty and lack of morals, she captivated Justinian, heir to the throne. All the pressure that was brought to bear could not move him from his desire to marry this woman of no birth and seemingly of no character. Later, when Justinian ascended the throne, he made her his empress, regent in all things, equal to himself, a position no emperor's wife had held before. Theodora proved that, besides beauty, she possessed rare intellectual gifts; also strength of character and fidelity, for, after her marriage, no breath of scandal touched her. It is a matter of history that, during the internecine strife which arose, her counsel and courage saved the crown.

In the early days of Rome married women seemed to find as little favor in the eyes of their lords as did the matrons of Greece. Metellus, the censor, thus addressed the Roman senate: "Could we exist without wives at all, doubtless we should all rid ourselves of the plague they are to us. Since nature, however, has decreed that we cannot dispense with this infliction, let us bear it manfully and rather look to the permanent conservation of the state than to our own transient satisfaction." A century later Augustus addressed the senate on this subject in language hardly more polite. He deprecated the large number of bachelors in Rome, and expanded upon the many favors that were heaped upon the married men by the state. "For less rewards than these," he said, "would thousands expose their lives; and can they not, then, entice a Roman citizen to arise and marry a wife?"

The satirists Juvenal, Tacitus, Seneca and Martial are most bitter in their attacks upon the women of their time.

Should we put credence in their statements, we must believe that whatever influence women had in their age tended to the demoralization of the state. But all satirists are exaggerators, and must be taken with many grains of salt. Seneca pours continual and virulent abuse upon women, yet, in one of his letters, speaks most warmly of his second wife, Paulina. Augustus shared his power with Livia, and consulted her on all grave occasions. His sister, Octavia, was also treated with high distinction. In the triumph of Claudius, Agrippina, the widow of Germanicus, was seated on a throne close to that of the emperor, and received from the legions imperial homage and honor. In the time of the Antonines the empresses were called the mothers of camps and legions, and later of the senate and the people. Under the Severi it happened more than once that the reigning empress disposed of the empire, and governed it as she thought best under the nominal rule of her husband or her son. The ideal Roman matron was a lofty character, with high ideals of duty and honor—a Cordelia or a Lucretia.

But in ancient Rome, alas, the bonds of marriage were generally regarded as irksome, because women were not educated to be companions for men, and because men were forced, under heavy penalties, to choose their wives from the same limited circle that had been provided for them by the laws of Numa. When the temple of Janus was closed in the reign of Augustus, the luxurious vices of the East began to invade Rome. Vast numbers of well-educated and attractive women poured into the city, and began to take the same position as the hetairai in Athens. The Romans, with practical common sense, then began to educate their own daughters, in order to make them attractive to men. The boys and girls attended school together, and so coeducation was born in the best days of imperial Rome. This had an immediate effect, and, despite the old laws, the women began to have an influence and to make an impress upon

art and literature. Horace sings the praises of the accomplished wife of Mæcenas, and Pliny, later, informs us that his wife, Calpurnia, took the greatest interest in his literary work, and that she set his verses to music. Educated women were numerous during the first century of the empire. Agrippina, mother of Nero, wrote the memoirs of her youth. Sulpicia won renown in poetry. Such women achieved wide influence and became the true companions of cultivated men, appearing at social entertainments accompanied by their daughters. When paganism declined and Christianity began to make itself felt in Rome, many women exercised great influence in spreading that faith. Marcella and Portia were the devoted friends of St. Jerome, and were so learned in exegesis that they were frequently consulted on obscure points by the clergy.

Curiously enough, centuries later, women of the *hetairai* class held remarkable sway in Rome. In the sixteenth century the famous courtesan, Tullia d'Aragona, held the city spell-bound by the charm of her wonderful eyes, and Imperia, whom Raphael immortalized, was so generally beloved that the day of her death was observed as one of public mourning. "The whole city was moved when this young deity was snatched away on Tiber's banks," exclaims Vitalis. But Imperia and her kind became rather burdensome, and Leo X. finally banished them from Rome. This expulsion evoked loud cries of distress. "How doleful the jubilee will be!" cried a pilgrim. "What shall I do in Rome now?"

Hardly can one think of ancient Rome without a vision of

The Serpent of old Nile,
With her sweet, betraying smile.

For what an extraordinary influence this wonderful woman had upon Rome at the most stirring time of its history! She came, she saw, she conquered the great Caesar himself, before she began the enactment of that love tragedy with Mark Antony which forms one of the most remarkable

chapters in the history of the world. All the old writers, the Roman and Greek historians whose works have been preserved, are full of her. Hirtius, Dion Cassius, Suetonius, Appian, Diodorus, Strabo, Paternulus, Julian, Orosius, Eutropius, even Livy; and last, but not least, Plutarch. Then Josephus narrates the episodes in Cleopatra's life in which Herod had a share.

It was upon Plutarch that Shakespeare mainly drew for the framework of his great tragedy so curiously alike in its dénouement to his earlier drama, "Romeo and Juliet."

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.

And so the modern Sardou still finds inspiration in this immortal woman, whom the ages themselves, indeed, cannot wither, and out of her infinite variety presents her from another point of view.

Plutarch appears to doubt Cleopatra's peerless beauty, but he says that "the contact of her presence, if you lived with her, was irresistible. The attraction of her person, joined with the charm of her conversation and the character that attended all she said or did, was something bewitching." He describes her playfulness, her love of fun and frolic, and the cheerfulness with which she took part in the "fond and childish pastimes" in which Antony delighted. The Romans said that she had bewitched Antony by her charms and poisons. Bewitch him she truly did by her charms, but these were not incantations, but the gleam of her eye, the "contact of her presence." Bad she was, yes; but unfortunately men do not love women because they are good, but because they are charming. Antony forsook two virtuous wives during his dalliance with the fair sorceress of the Nile—Fulvia, who died while on her way to visit her husband with an idea of winning him back, and her successor, the stately Octavia, sister of Augustus.

For this Egyptian woman Antony threw away the empire of the world,

the sceptre that Augustus won. As for Cleopatra herself, she erased her kingdom from the map of the world, and reduced Egypt to a province never again to enjoy its ancient glory. So much was sacrificed on the altar of love. What wonder that the story of this love, guilty though it was, has so won the ear of the world!

And what a tragedy was its ending! Antony, certainly the greatest captain then living, left the great sea-fight in the straits of Actium and followed Cleopatra, who, with sixty ships, basely hoisted sail and fled away. Nineteen legions and 12,000 cavalry were left on shore; these vainly waited seven days for Antony's orders, and then went over to the victorious Octavius. History cannot furnish such another extraordinary desertion. The man sacrificed everything to follow the woman who was playing him false. Surely a wonderful example of the power of woman!

After a period of extraordinary feasting and dissipation at Alexandria, the curtain fell on the fateful romance of Antony and Cleopatra. All the while the subtle queen was playing into the hands of Octavius, and daily betraying Egypt. First Pelusium was surrendered; then Antony, fighting before Alexandria, was deserted by the Egyptian army and navy under private orders from Cleopatra. All knew the duplicity of the queen before it was finally discovered by her lover. Then in a rage he fled to the palace to kill his mistress, but he was given a false report that she had already destroyed herself. Rage turned to despair, and Antony, retiring to his room, fell upon his sword. But it did not give him the immediate death he hoped for. Officers broke into his room, and Cleopatra was told of her lover's condition. She requested that he be brought to the tower where she had taken refuge.

Antony, apprised of her request, and learning that his mistress still lived, opened his dying eyes, and begged to be taken to her. This was done. Cleopatra dared not unlock the gate of her tower, and the meeting of the two

lovers is thus dramatically related by Plutarch: "Cleopatra, looking from a sort of window, let down ropes and cords, to which Antony was fastened, and she and her two women drew him up. Those that were present say that nothing was ever more sad than this spectacle, to see Antony, covered all over with blood, and just expiring, thus drawn up, still holding up his hands to her, and lifting up his body with the little force he had left (as, indeed, it was no easy task for the women); and Cleopatra, with all her strength, clinging to the rope, and straining her head to the ground, with difficulty pulled him up, while those below encouraged her with their cries, and joined in all her efforts and anxiety." Plutarch goes on to tell how Antony was laid upon a bed, how tenderly Cleopatra cared for him, and how he died happy in her arms.

It is related that after Cleopatra had been taken from her tower by Roman soldiers, the victorious Octavius, in an interview with her, kept his eyes fixed upon the ground lest he, too, should fall a victim to her power. And so, despairing of being able to ensnare the conqueror, and in dread of being taken a captive to Rome, this extraordinary woman put an end to her life. Plutarch describes the finding of the body by Cæsar's messengers after the asp had done its fatal work:

"When they had opened the doors, they found her stark dead, laid upon a bed of gold, attired and arrayed in her royal robes, and one of her two women, which was called Iras, dead at her feet; and her other woman, called Charmian, half dead and trembling, trimming the diadem which Cleopatra wore upon her head."

She left a letter requesting Octavius to bury her in the same tomb with Antony, whom she had interred in the sepulchres of the kings of Egypt. The request was granted, and so these deathless lovers slept side by side in the sleep of ages. Octavius returned to enjoy his triumph at Rome without the captive queen with whom he had hoped to grace it; returned as Augus-

tus to inaugurate the Augustan age, a part that Antony might have played had it not been for that royal mistress who, even in death, held his body in a foreign tomb.

What an extraordinary Homeric catalogue could be made of the women who have sat on thrones and exercised a wide influence over the world and its history! From out the ages comes the shadowy memory of the great Semiramis, the builder of Babylon—the glory of whose reign eclipsed that of any of the monarchs of Assyria. But her history is lost amid the mazes of legend and myth that make her a semi-divine personage; these, however, were not the arbitrary creations of poets, for it is certain that her name was popularly connected with many famous places and monuments, and both Strabo and Herodotus speak of her great works and buildings.

But to come down to more recent times, when history speaks with authority, I must mention one to whom America itself owes a deep debt—Isabella of Spain. Because she had faith in Columbus, and furnished him the means to carry out the expedition that resulted in the discovery of a new world, her name is known and revered all over America. But to her, at the time, busy with all sorts of undertakings, this act was but a small item in her administration. She, indeed, was “the mother of Spain,” the real founder of its power and greatness. She was a sovereign, like Elizabeth of England, not merely a consort-queen, like Marie Antoinette. When she signed articles of marriage with Ferdinand he bound himself in these to respect the laws and usages of Castile, to fix his residence there, and not to quit it without the consent of Isabella, to alienate no property belonging to the crown, to prefer no foreigners to municipal offices; indeed, to make no appointments of a civil or military nature without her consent; and to resign to her exclusively the right of nomination to ecclesiastic-

al benefices. All ordinances of a public nature were to be subscribed by both. Thus Isabella held the real power in her own hands, and to her is due, therefore, the greater share of the glory of the glorious reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. “The chivalrous heart of the Spaniard,” says Prescott, “did homage to her as his tutelar saint; and she held a control over her people such as no man could have acquired in any age—and probably no woman, in an age and country less romantic.”

During this reign the Moorish domination, which had lasted for 741 years, was shattered, and Granada, the stronghold and capital of the Moors, was captured by the Spaniards—Granada the Beautiful, whose loss brought forth *el ultimo suspiro del Moro*, the last sigh of the Moor. And when the standard of St. James waved from the towers of that loved city the grandees of Spain did homage to Isabella as the sovereign of Granada, and all acknowledged that blood and treasure would have gone for naught but for her fortitude and assistance in the time of trouble and almost general despair. Judged from the standpoint of to-day, Isabella's reign is stained by some great atrocities; the stories of the Inquisition and of the expulsion of the Jews are not pleasant reading, but despite these Isabella was a great queen, a great woman, who left her impress not only on her own time, but on the centuries that followed.

Blood tells. The blood of Isabella ran in the veins of Maria Theresa, wife of Francis, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire—Archduchess of Austria, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, and of other lesser domains. For fifteen years she fought with Frederick the Great over the duchy of Silesia, which he had stolen from her. He conquered, finally, but her armies beat the great Prussian in several battles, and had she been able to follow up the advantages she gained, and to have taken the field in person, she might have won back Silesia.

But Maria Theresa was even greater in the arts of peace than in those of war. She instituted admirable reforms in her dominions, and greatly improved the hard conditions of the peasantry, freeing them from manorial rights. She abolished torture, and established copyright on writings. She instituted a school system, and in every province she started and maintained a "normal" or model school as a standard for the other schools in the province. She added manual training to the instruction in the common schools, and this idea has spread over the world.

A contemporary of Maria Theresa, and her sometime ally against Frederick, was that remarkable woman, Catherine II., Empress of Russia. A petty German princess, profligate and unscrupulous, she ascended the throne of Russia over the body of her husband, the weak Peter III., whose assassination she had brought about by the hand of a lover. She had many lovers, and she made all of them rich at the expense of the state; but with all her faults she accomplished great things.

"Catherine did more for Russia," says Delacroix, "by her equity and beneficence than all her generals did by their warlike virtues. So vast an empire did not need wider bounds; its true welfare could be more essentially promoted by favoring population, by wise laws, by encouraging industry and commerce, by cultivating the arts and reconciling them to a stubborn land, uncongenial to their nature, by bettering the manners of a still savage race of nobles, and by communicating sensibility to a people whom the roughness of their climate had rendered impenetrable to all the soft affections and social virtues of humanity. These are the works which already make the name of Catherine illustrious, and will reflect glory on her memory."

Not the briefest mention can be made of great female sovereigns without including Elizabeth of England, and no monarch left a greater im-

press upon that land. She lacked womanly charm, perhaps, but hers was a great intellect, and by statecraft she wrought wonders. There is too much to say about her power and all that she accomplished to say it here. I shall simply pass on to another sovereign of her time who perished miserably—the beautiful, the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots.

Queen of France before she was Queen of Scotland, and so doubly a sovereign, Mary lives rather as a beautiful and fascinating personality, a captivating woman, than as a potentate. She was dowered with beauty of person, with sprightliness of mind, with all that goes to the making of charm in woman. If she made no great success as a queen on the thrones of France or Scotland, yet as a woman she has won the hearts of the world. As a historical character she is invested with undying interest, and so has given rise to endless controversy concerning her guilt or innocence of the terrible accusations made against her. Even grave historians do not seem able to talk of her dispassionately; they lose their heads or their hearts, and are either frantic antagonists or still more frantic partisans. But, guilty or not guilty, she remains still a charming woman, full of subtle feminine power.

She was Gallic in her disposition, and always French at heart as a result of her early training. At St.-Germain, another remarkable woman sovereign, Catherine de' Medici, had gathered about her a pretty child's court, where rhyming and romance were the order of the day. Little Mary Stuart held the sceptre of love and beauty, and Ronsard was its laureate. Catherine de' Medici wrote, "Our little queenlet of Scotland has but to smile to turn all these French heads." These undoubtedly were the happiest days that Mary knew. When she left St.-Germain it was as the wife of Francis II., whose brief court was established at Blois and Amboise. Hardly had Francis breathed his last, and the Guises

fallen from power, when the young widow received rather clear intimation that it was not well for her to remain in France. Quitting the land of her adoption, she uttered that touching cry: "Farewell, my young days, my happy days, farewell forever!" And, indeed, she did bid farewell to her happiness; the dour Scotland of her day could have been but little to her liking. Nor was she to the liking of the grim Scottish lords of the Reformation, who said of her: "This is no Christian; 'tis that pagan idol, Diana, worshiped of old of the Ephesians."

What wonder that this young girl of nineteen, bred in the elegance and luxury of the French court, and suddenly called upon to rule over a turbulent people, did not make a success of her reign? This is not the place to go into the long-vexed question of her guilt or innocence; the story of her execution is one of the dark tragedies of history, for her beauty and her feminine charm must ever win for her the sympathy of the world. It is a curious fact that she who lost her crown and her head may, indeed, be styled the mother of kings, for with the single exception of the King of Sweden, a descendant of Bernadotte whom Napoleon made a king, there is not an important ruler in Europe who is not descended from Mary, Queen of Scots.

A woman of an entirely different type, yet one who dominated her epoch, was Catherine de' Medici. She was handsome, but lacked womanliness and the power of using love as a quickening instead of a destroying spirit. At the time to which I have alluded, when Mary of Scotland was at St.-Germain, Catherine had but little power. Her husband, Henry II., was entirely under the influence of the beautiful Diana of Poitiers, and she dominated him throughout his reign. After his death came the brief reign of Francis II., Mary's husband, and then for the rest of her life Catherine was the real sovereign of France. It was a

frightful period of civil and religious strifes, massacres and assassinations, and the name of Catherine de' Medici is indelibly connected with the awful massacre of St. Bartholomew.

"I see quite well you do not know my mother," whispered Charles IX. to Coligny. "She is the greatest meddler in all the world." She certainly meddled in his affairs, and if we are to believe Masson she was the indirect cause of his death. Masson relates that Charles was minded to kill Gondi in order to gain possession of his wife. Catherine told Gondi of Charles's intentions, and he poisoned Charles. Afterward Catherine poisoned Gondi.

Catherine de' Medici was an embodiment of power, but not of the womanly power that is indicated, for instance, by Mary, Queen of Scots. It was power upheld and stained with deeds of violence and blood. She dwelt, of course, in troublous times, and there are not wanting apologists who excuse her crimes as being a choice of lesser evils. But she is not a pleasant woman to contemplate, this mysterious, crafty Italian, who knew how "to wait and to hate." She possessed the wisdom of the serpent, undoubtedly, especially as regarded the judicious use of poisons, but she lacked the fairer attributes of the dove.

It was not the queens of France who had the widest influence on that country, but the royal favorites. They were the dispensers of largesses and favors; they were the powers behind the throne. Diana of Poitiers had one of her creatures appointed superintendent of the finances in order to obtain free access to the public treasury; and she obtained for her son-in-law, the Duc d'Aumale, the gift of all the vacant land in the realm. She sold her patronage to François Allemand, one of the presidents of the chamber of accounts, who became, thanks to her protection, a wholesale robber of the taxes. By her intolerance and by influencing the elevation of the Cardinal of Lor-

raïne, she provoked a violent Catholic reaction, which prepared the way for the civil wars.

Madame d'Étampes, the mistress of Francis I., who had received all sorts of royal favors, found herself, when Francis was sinking slowly to his grave, face to face with Diana. A struggle for supremacy between these two women was begun, and became the turning point of political intrigue. D'Étampes, seeing that her reign was over, either through vengeance or cupidity, sold all sorts of political information to Spain, and threw into that country's possession a number of important towns. Her predecessor, the Comtesse de Châteaubriant, played havoc with French arms and policy in Italy by the protection she extended over her three brothers, for whom she procured important appointments. Henriette d'Entragues exacted from Henry IV. the marquise of Verneuil and a hundred thousand crowns, representing the taxes of three or four provinces. In order to be revenged upon Sully, who prevented the king from marrying her, she allied herself with the enemies of the king, entered into the Biron plot, opened negotiations with Spain, and aided the projects of Philip III. against France.

On the other hand, to be sure, a royal favorite, Agnes Sorel, is credited with having roused Charles VII. from his lethargy, and is thus associated in glory with Joan of Arc. Francis I. wrote a quatrain celebrating the influence of Agnes in expelling the English, but the war of deliverance was begun before Charles met *la dame de beauté*.

The honors of nobility and the highest dignities were bestowed upon the favorites. It was necessary, as Richelieu said, to satisfy the fierce hunger of their ambition. The kings made it a matter of honor to treat them royally; they opened the way to the highest offices for their relations, and gave the favorites unlimited credits in the funds of the state. Fontanges received from Louis XIV. about 12,000,000 francs. Pom-

padour cost Louis XV., according to the accounts she kept herself, over 36,000,000 francs; and the woman Bécu, created the Comtesse du Barry, was even more extravagant. It was not only by the enormous sums of money lavished on them, by costly presents and fêtes, that the favorites helped to ruin the treasury, but by extravagances of all kinds. Some of the most beautiful palaces in France were erected or remodeled to please some insatiable mistress.

Louis XIV. took both La Vallière and Montespan with him to the wars, and received them at the camp of Compiègne with a magnificence which surpassed that of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. He ordered towns besieged and bombarded for their amusement, as a supplement to the diversions of the court. Doubtless gallantry had much to do with the follies of his youth; but "The Grand Monarch," who had amused himself with many women, and who broke the heart of his queen, Maria Theresa, was destined to become the slave of one, the extraordinary Madame de Maintenon, who made of him an unwitting tool. She exercised her wonderful power not only over the king, but over France. "During more than thirty years," says St.-Amand, "she was to reign without a rival over the soul of the greatest of all kings; and it was not the monarch alone, but the monarchy, which was to incline respectfully before her. The whole court was at her feet, soliciting a word, a glance."

And this woman was born in a prison at Niort, the daughter of an accomplished rascal by the name of d'Aubigné. She had a hard struggle with poverty, and at the age of seventeen married the poor poet Scarron, an invalid, twisted up with rheumatism. It was as the widow Scarron that she made the acquaintance of Madame de Montespan, and through her that of Louis XIV. She is described by contemporaries as possessing regular features, a fresh complexion, and dark and brilliant eyes—

altogether a very handsome woman. Through the influence of Madame de Montespan she was appointed by the king governess to his children by Montespan. The position was a lucrative one, and Madame Scarron in time was able to purchase the estate of Maintenon. The king at first took little notice of her, but gradually the wily woman made her influence felt, and so won the royal favor that she was able to have her erstwhile patron, Madame de Montespan, dismissed from court. After this act of base ingratitude she reigned supreme; there were no other mistresses. In 1685, at the age of fifty, she was privately married to the king, who was then forty-seven years old. She ruled France, for she ruled the king, who styled himself the state. Truly, a wonderful history for the child of a convict!

In the reign that followed, that of Louis XV., it was still the hand of a woman that really held the sceptre of France. Pompadour was surrounded with homage and adulation. She became, as Barbier says, mistress of the state and of its offices. She transported to the field of politics the disastrous power of her petty spites, and that she might revenge herself for an epigram of Frederick's, she broke the alliances, quarreled with Prussia in order to unite the house of Bourbon with that of Austria, and plunged France in all the disasters of the Seven Years' War. Madame du Barry, who had all Pompadour's vices without any of her mental graces, carried on affairs with the same high hand, and subjected Louis XV. to a most shameful rule. She obtained the dismissal of Choiseul, the ablest minister of the reign, in order to place in power those who were most unworthy, Maupeou, d'Aquillon and Terray. Bankruptcy, the sale of offices, all sorts of evils followed, among them the exile of the parliaments of Paris and Rouen. It was owing to the ascendancy of du Barry that Louis XV. was an unwilling and helpless witness of the first partition of Poland.

As with men, the evil that women do lives after them. Undoubtedly it was the dead hands of these women who had so dominated France that helped to destroy its throne. The people had seen the kingdom impoverished by the extortions of the favorites, and its preponderance in Europe destroyed by ministers whom their caprices had forced upon the state. Louis XVI. and the beautiful and unfortunate Marie Antoinette were but the scapegoats for all that had gone before. The queen was accused of every crime committed by former royal favorites, of disposing of the public funds and offices, of intriguing with the enemies of the state, of causing the overthrow of ministers; but none of these crimes was ever really fastened upon her. Louis XVI. was the best disposed and most virtuous of the Capetians, but despite this he and his queen, and the last mistress of the former reign, the reckless, extravagant Comtesse du Barry, were visited, by the inexorable logic of the revolution, with the same condemnation, and perished upon the same scaffold.

In England the royal favorites never attained to anything like the power of their sisters in France; indeed, outside of the sovereigns, women have had comparatively little influence upon the destinies of England. Women in France were everywhere the power behind the throne, the *deæ ex machina*. No movement was carried through without them. "They form," says Montesquieu, "a kind of republic whose members, always active, aid and serve one another. It is a new state within a state; and whoever observes the action of those in power, if he does not know the women who govern them, is like the man who sees the action of a machine, but does not know its secret springs."

The Marquise de Lambert was admitted to have made half the Academicians; while the Pompadour had to be reckoned with in every political change in Europe. Besides the royal favorites there were the brilliant women

of the salons, which during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries so flourished in France and became centres for the spreading of new ideas. The greatest men of the age came to them for inspiration, and the women were their companions and equals; they influenced those who approached them, and through them the opinion of the time. What a long line of remarkable women mention of the salons evokes, from Madame de Rambouillet and the Duchesse de Longueville to Madame d'Holbach and Madame de Staël! There are few distinguished Frenchmen with whose fame some more or less gifted woman is not closely allied—Montaigne, Mademoiselle de Gournay; La Rochefoucauld, Madame de La Fayette; d'Alembert, Madame de Lespinasse; Châteaubriand, Madame Récamier. Rousseau, Diderot and the social reformers found their most enthusiastic disciples among the women of the salons, who were the principal abettors in spreading abroad doctrines that largely overthrew the old foundations of European society, and, indeed, are still alive to-day. In France, as in ancient Greece, measures concerning government and social conditions that have profoundly affected man's status in civilized states have been greatly indebted to the sympathy of women.

The salons led by women in England were fewer, and their influence was no by means so widely felt. That of Lady Palmerston, which flourished about a half-century ago, was perhaps the most successful and powerful politically. Her two daughters, Lady Shaftesbury and the vivacious Lady Jocelin, helped in no small measure to make this salon the most famous in England. That of Lady Granville was more exclusive, but more affected.

Lady Holland gathered about her at Holland House the most brilliant minds of her day, and hers was a genuine salon. But since the time of these three great dames no one has taken up their sceptres. The salon idea has not been sufficiently popular in England to make it successful. Men regarded it askance, and but few women cared to assume its burdens. France was its real home, though that extraordinary salon presided over by the Duchess Anna Amalia at Weimar must not be forgotten. At this little court gathered Goethe, Schiller, Wieland and Herder, and it had a decided influence on German literature at its formative period.

It will thus be seen that the source of woman's power lies in her intellect as well as in her heart.

The woman's soul leadeth us
Upward and on.

This article might be extended indefinitely in giving examples of women who have put forth a peculiar power, and who by it have dominated those about them, the world in which they lived. Influences for good or evil, however, are best determined through a long perspective, so I have purposely avoided drawing my examples from the present time. But all the examples in the world could only indicate and illustrate, they could not explain the essence and mystery of woman's power or charm. We know it, we feel it, but it is too subtle for the touch of words. It is playing about us to-day just as it flashes upon and illumines the great drama of the past; a shuttle that is forever playing, back and forth, and back and forth, forever weaving the very warp and woof of life.



SHE (*simpering*)—Why am I such a social success?

HE—Because you know such a lot of people and—

SHE—And—what else?

HE—Oh—er—nothing else.

AMOR SEMPER

KINGS, who reigned over realms unbounded,
 Queens, who carried a sceptre, too,
 Tell us, pray, when the last trump sounded,
 What in life seemed the best to you?

Sages, ye who the great sects founded,
 Poets, ye who the world's need knew;
 Tell us, pray, when the last trump sounded,
 What in life seemed the best to you?

Braves, whose deeds once the world astounded,
 Mimes, whose art made the play seem true;
 Tell us, pray, when the last trump sounded,
 What in life seemed the best to you?

Strange! oh, strange! To the word propounded,
 Came this cry from the courts above:
*"Naught to us, when the last trump sounded,
 Seemed as sweet as a little love!"*

SUSIE M. BEST.



A TRAGEDY

NIGHT is approaching. The outlines of the furniture grow vague and the pattern of the wall-paper is dim and hazy. It is time for me to take my accustomed position for my nightly watch. I dread to leave the warm library and its glowing grate fire, to go into the chilling air. It is an uncomfortable, Wintry evening. The electric light makes the trees cast queer, weird shadows. I do not like them.

For four nights now I have taken this same path, at the same hour, to the door of her home. The past efforts have been fruitless. I have not seen or heard a sign of her. She has probably been warned of my intentions. If I could see her only for a minute, it would all be over before she realized it. She would not suffer long. Hark! is it she? No, it is only the leaves. How the wind moans! What a night it is! Everything is so quiet and queer in the fading light! It quite unnerves me. Listen! I hear her coming; it's she at last. Little does she know I am here. She is coming to the door. Now she is looking out. Can she see me? No; she's stepping out on the grass. Now is my opportunity.

I wonder if that foolish mouse thought *I*, my mistress's pet cat, was not to be feared.

ETHEL WINANS.

AN INDISCREET DIVORCE

By Walter E. Grogan

IT was an unfortunate case. I am an enthusiastic man. That is more a misfortune than a fault. I really cannot be held responsible if my enthusiasm leads me into errors.

When I first met Beatrix she wore just that shade of sapphire blue which is divine. I grew enthusiastic. There really was no harm in that, for I have excellent taste in clothes, and there are so few men who ever get beyond an appreciation of ties. The unfortunate part of the business was that I confused Beatrix and her gown. There, I own, I made a mistake. In extenuation I may point to the fact that even unenthusiastic men, on first introduction to a girl, put her down on the dotted line opposite "Valse" as "green—pink sash—white shoes." So I confused Beatrix and her gown, and construed mere enthusiastic admiration for her taste in dress into a warm love. We were very happy for three weeks. She wore excellent frocks, and I had expectations. Then, one day, I called when she did not expect me. She ought to have refused to see me. She did not. She saw me, and she wore a beastly heather mixture. Then I knew that it was dress, not Beatrix. The day before, I met Annette. Annette is charming—she is exactly like a triolet, dainty scented, quite Dresden. A triolet? Yes, she is rather given to repetition, but the repetition of something charming and dainty, and Dresden is always—well, charming. But really Annette had nothing to do with my discovery. It was my enthusiasm that had played me false. The heather mixture showed me how intolerable life must be, spent with

a girl, however lovable—there were many moments when Beatrix was absolutely rare—who was given to such egregious lapses. It was an unfortunate case.

When I considered the matter after breakfast I resolved to seek Reggie and ask his advice. It is difficult to struggle with an abstruse problem confronted by the reproachful sardine on toast, neglectedly lingering on the table.

Reggie was a barrister and kept chambers in the Temple. The chambers were two rooms, up a fatiguing number of stairs. Luckily, few people ever mounted them—I mean luckily for them. Reggie prayed devoutly for the wearing away of the stairs.

I went into the first room. It was fitted up in the usual frowsy style of a clerk's room. The clerk was in. He left off balancing an orange on a ruler, and seized a pile of foolscap papers, indorsed and tied up with red tape. Reggie and I had bought that tape. I remember the law stationers looked upon us suspiciously, as fearful that we were trying to make a corner in it.

"Mr. Daubeny in?" I inquired.

"'Crown *versus* Larks, Norman *versus* Norman and Bates,'" the clerk murmured. "Er—I beg your pardon. Very sorry. Urgent business. Wait a few minutes. In consultation with Messrs. Tapperton and Forsdyke. He may see you," he added, doubtfully; "but we are in court very soon."

I sat down. "You haven't been long with Mr. Daubeny," I said.

"Came on Monday."

"Ah! Rather good name that—Norman *versus* Norman and Bates. My

invention—that pile of papers by your side. All indorsed by me.”

He looked up, suspiciously.

“Tell Mr. Daubeny that I am here—stay, I’ll go in. I am quite aware of Mr. Daubeny’s extensive practice. In fact, I don’t mind telling you that I am Tapperton—alias Forsdyke.”

I passed to the door of the inner room. Then I turned and smiled encouragingly at the youthful clerk. He stared at me with a slow grin, his quill dropping inelegantly backward out of his ear, with the wet point making a neat copy of the course of the River Nile over his right temple. It was fascinating, and I should have stayed to watch its completion if it had not been for the Beatrix affair. At the memory of the heather mixture I opened Reggie’s door abruptly.

Reggie was busily occupied in solving the latest penny puzzle bought in the streets. He had a big pipe in his mouth, and his tobacco jar stood proudly on the top of half a dozen volumes of law reports.

“That you, Vernon?” he said. “My clerk ain’t quite up to my friends yet. He’s not bad, though, is he? Looks well, is a little bald, and—and that quill behind his ear gives an air of business, eh? At least when it’s there; he hasn’t quite got the hang of it yet, and it falls out pretty frequently.”

“Reggie,” I answered, closing the door, dusting a chair with my handkerchief and sitting down, “I have come to consult you.”

An eager look came into his eyes, and he took his pipe out of his mouth.

“Legally?” he asked, laconically.

“As a friend,” I replied. He replaced his pipe and looked regretfully at the puzzle.

“I have found that I do not care for Beatrix,” I said, with an air of importance, “and I am unwilling to entail upon her the misery of a married existence without love.”

“And with you.”

“In short, Reggie, my nature revolts at the immorality of marriage unsanctified——”

“Oh, yes; I know—cut that. In short, you’ve made an ass of yourself.”

“Reggie, if you meet my confidences——”

“Who is the other girl?”

“She does not weigh with me. I regard the whole matter from a higher standpoint.”

“Of course,” he said. “What do you want? You cannot marry both without unpleasant consequences.”

“Reggie, she must give me up.”

“Of course. Why not visit her constantly?”

I brushed his remark aside. There are moments when Reggie disgusts me.

“It really is an awkward case. I should have thought your legal training would have devised something. One moment,” I added, impetuously; “I have it! Reggie, I must be cited in a divorce case! Beatrix is essentially well brought up—and there’s her aunt.”

“In a divorce case! Whose?”

“My dear fellow, that is your business, not mine. Anybody’s—yours!”

“But I’m not married.”

“Well, Smith’s, or Brown’s—I am not particular. You are up in these matters more than I am.”

“Vernon, I must protest!”

“Professionally, of course. I suppose it is hardly regular—but it will be experience for you.”

“You must be mad!” Reggie looked at me doubtfully, and his pipe went out in his amazement.

I looked at him reproachfully.

“My dear Reggie,” I said, “I wish to—to save Beatrix from a false step. I cannot go to her and say, ‘I have reconsidered my offer, and must decline the honor of considering myself engaged to you.’ I cannot do it. The whole thing would be so brutal. But if I can induce her to come to me and say—well, you know the sort of thing she would say—I am free to woo and win the only woman for me.”

“If—mind, I say ‘if,’ for I am not enamoured of the scheme—if the dodge succeeds this time, you won’t be able to work it again with the other girl.”

"You do not understand that Annette is the only girl for me—that I love her——"

"Yes, yes; you always do—there is a great similarity in your loving."

"I assure you, Reggie, I merely mistook admiration of dress for love. We are all liable to errors of judgment."

Reggie grinned. It is a disagreeable habit.

"But how in the name of the Lord Chancellor," said he, "are we to work the dodge?"

Then the whole idea flashed upon me. I am enthusiastic—I am also given to flashes of genius.

"Good heavens, an inspiration! Your clerk shall serve me with the citation papers at her house, and in the bosom of her family! Then my infamy will be known, and I shall be free!"

"Why should I mix myself up in this matter?"

"Don't be unsympathetic, Reggie. Remember, you can always rely upon my doing the same thing for you."

Reggie looked quite serious over the matter. However, in the end, he fell in with my plans, although I regret that he did not regard them in the same moral light that I did, but looked forward to their fulfilment rather as a joke than as a means of preserving a highly estimable young lady from so fatal a step as matrimony without the love that should gild and illumine it.

The clerk was sufficiently passive. He was paid thirty shillings a week for being passive, and he fulfilled his part of the contract admirably. I believe if he had been requested to serve a writ on the Czar he would have said, "Very well, sir. Do you know whether I start from Waterloo or Victoria?"

A week later I visited Beatrix in the sanctity of her own home, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to myself on her behalf. I was about to confer on her a great benefit. I was about to sacrifice myself on the altar of suburban morality, so that I might shield her from a matrimonial

existence unsunned by the god of love. Besides, Beatrix was not in my set, and knew nobody I knew. That made matters much easier.

I went up the flight of steps—flanked by bushes resembling birch brooms, being all twigs and no leaves—was admitted into the hall, and thence into the drawing-room.

Beatrix and her aunt were there. The aunt sat in charge of the table where the tea would be presently. No one else was present. I was a little early—besides, it was not their day. For reasons of my own I desired that my sacrifice should be as private as possible.

Beatrix, of course, was pleased. She smiled at me. The aunt looked out of the window at a dilapidated growler crawling down the road. The aunt was always discreet. She was a poor relation, and poor relations are invariably discreet. Beatrix was wearing a new tea-gown. It was pale blue, and suited her. It suddenly occurred to me that she was very handsome. On the whole, I was not sure that I appreciated flippant prettiness—such as Annette's—more than statuesque beauty. The memory of the heather mixture faded.

I sat down beside Beatrix on a settee, and we began to look at an album.

"Would you not like a new album, Mr. Vernon?" the aunt asked. "You have devoted a great deal of time to that one during the last month."

"I am thinking," I said, blandly, "of writing a book on hereditary beauty, or the development of features in families."

"This is unexpected, Deen," Beatrix said. "I thought you were busy with some private worry."

I had forgotten that I had been preparing her for the sacrifice. I found myself wishing that I had not been so hasty.

"Yes; I have only snatched an hour from the very jaws of this devouring anxiety. You cannot know how soothing it is to fly here for a respite from business."

"You should tell me, Deen. All your troubles should be mine."

"It will be—I mean they will be—one day. Until then I would preserve you from all worries."

"Poor Deen!" Beatrix said, softly. "You are taking someone else's trouble upon you, and sacrificing yourself for him."

"Her," I murmured, absently, thinking how beautifully she had stated her own case.

Beatrix sat up very straight, much straighter than I thought anyone could sit in a tea-gown and a lounge chair, and said, very distinctly, quite painfully so, after our confidential murmurs into the album:

"I beg your pardon?"

"My poor mother—" I began, hurriedly. "You don't remember my mother, do you, Beatrix? No; nor do I. My poor mother had a sister—mothers do sometimes—and she—there, you know—a mother's only sister—and—only indiscreet—not really—quite a family secret. I don't think," I added, as reproachfully as I could, "you would wish me to betray a confidence, to sacrifice my honor——"

"Dear Deen, of course not," she answered; and the stiff attitude of her tea-gown relaxed.

"Clouds," I went on, "come into the serenest skies. We may not hope to escape little—shall I say less sunshiny days?"

"But," she murmured, "I shall always trust you throughout."

"Men," I said, "will tell you falsehoods about me."

"I will not believe them!" she replied, firmly.

I began to get a little uneasy. This style of conversation did not seem calculated to further the success of my plan. Then, on the other hand, I wondered whether I wished my plan to succeed. I felt I was growing enthusiastic about the tea-gown or its wearer, and I could not decide which.

"Sometimes, no doubt, appearances will be so strong against me——"

"That I shall be proud to help you fight them. It will be my duty as well as my pride, Deen."

She looked so charming that I decided I would not carry through my plan that day. After all, it would be only postponing the decisive action. I could, I argued, still bring it to a masterly completion if I so willed. At all events, there was no immediate hurry.

In pursuance of this idea I rose and wandered to the window. There were two windows in the room. Beatrix's aunt was keeping a strained watch upon the road out of one; I went to the other. I don't think Beatrix liked my leaving her. She dropped the album rather aggressively.

I pretended that I had seen something. I said, quite casually and cheerfully: "Oh, I see the Symonds have new curtains—what a terrible tone!" and strolled toward the case-ment and looked out.

Beatrix said: "They are last year's, and they have not been dyed;" and I murmured: "I meant the ribbon," which did not sound honest or convincing, even to my ears.

Outside was Reggie's clerk. He was leaning against a lamp-post on the opposite side of the road. I saw him take out a watch. It was a large watch, with a watered silk ribbon. He was a few minutes before his time. He replaced the watch and yawned.

Beatrix grew sarcastic from the settee.

"There is a fine view from the window, Deen," she said. It was a suburban street—very suburban—one of those streets one discovers rarely during life.

"I like," I answered, "to see the flood of human life eddying down the street."

Beatrix's aunt joined in.

"I am so sorry," she murmured, sympathetically. "Carter Patterson's van passed just before you got up. I would have called you if I had thought you cared for such things. I have not seen anything else eddying."

It was a quiet street, but it was not so empty as that. There were two servants, one policeman and a crossing-sweeper, besides Reggie's clerk, in full view.

"Perhaps it will come back," I said. I was very uncomfortable. I knew I was behaving in a very extraordinary manner.

Suddenly Reggie's clerk looked up at me, and recognized me. That was my chance. I shook my head violently. He smiled. I waved my hand to him, eloquently, conveying my wish that he should go. He smiled again, and pulled out a blue paper which he fluttered in the air. In an agony of fear I shook my head more emphatically still, and began to speak to him with the deaf-and-dumb alphabet.

Beatrix said: "Don't you feel well, Deen, dear? What in the world is the matter?"

I replied: "I think I have a cold. I want to sneeze."

She answered: "Then come away from the window. I am sure there is a draught."

Reggie's clerk smiled more broadly than ever. It was evident that he did not understand the deaf and dumb alphabet.

"Good gracious! Beatrix, dear, I was never more insulted in all my life! To think I should live to see the day when a man dared to behave like that to me! The monster!"

Beatrix was surprised.

"My dear aunt, what is it?" she cried.

"There is a creature, a low, common creature, standing on the pavement opposite, and actually smiling at me, and—yes, he is flourishing a paper, and has now put his finger on his lips! Is he mad, Mr. Vernon?" she added.

"My dear Miss Ambruster!" I murmured, faintly. The idiot was still grinning violently, and every moment I expected him to enter the house.

"I trust that you will protect me from such wanton insult!"

"Perhaps," I said, feebly, "he does not mean it for you."

"Of course he does! Am I not to believe my own eyes?"

"Miss Ambruster," I said, jumping at the chance, "I will go down immediately and——"

"Do!" she cried, and then as I moved, "no, don't stir; he is coming here. He has crossed over. Was there ever such impertinence! That is strange!"

"What is strange?" I asked. I felt very limp, and was quite certain that my collar was distinctly flabby.

"He is smiling still, but he is looking at *your* window, Mr. Vernon."

"My window? Nonsense!" I said, hastily.

"Very well. If my remarks are to be termed nonsense——"

What else Miss Ambruster said I do not know, for at that moment I saw making for the door below, and coming from the opposite direction to that of Reggie's clerk, Miss Vandeleur. Miss Vandeleur and Annette are identical! For a few moments I was oblivious of all that was happening. The apparition of Miss Vandeleur was quite stunning.

Miss Ambruster, who was taking a keen interest in the doings of the clerk, caught sight of Annette.

"Beatrix," she cried, "that Vandeleur girl!"

Beatrix said, "Oh!" It was very eloquent.

"I did not know you knew Miss Vandeleur," I said. It was perfectly true. I always had an idea that very suburban people only knew their own families. Besides, Annette lived in Clapham, and Beatrix in Clapton.

"It is not an acquaintance of which we boast. It is not always easy to choose one's acquaintances. She thrust herself upon me, and, after all, she may mean well, and only be the victim of an unfortunate style."

I said, "Ah!" and sat down. Then I thought I had better be standing when the storm burst, so I stood up. Beatrix looked at me narrowly.

I heard the bell ring.

"You will excuse me, I know," I said, "but the fact is I have an important engagement. I have to send a wire to my brokers."

"Deen," said Beatrix, in a very severe voice, "you will stay here. You don't think I am going to meet that Vandeleur girl alone?"

"And you surely," added the aunt, "would not dream of permitting me to face that insolent and abandoned creature unsupported?"

"Miss Vandeleur?" I inquired.

"No; the creature who had the assurance to wink and smile at me from the other side of the road!"

The door opened, and the maid—very obviously tidied up—ushered in Miss Vandeleur.

"Miss Vandeleur," she said, solemnly, suffering from starched apron.

Miss Vandeleur glided in, ran effusively to Beatrix, and the two girls buried their noses in each other's sleeves. I heard a confused murmur of "So good of you!" "Not at all, dearest," and then the passively complacent face of Reggie's clerk appeared in the doorway.

The maid looked at him in apoplectic amazement.

"Well, I never!" she gasped. "What did I tell you, young man?"

"That I couldn't come up," Reggie's clerk said, easily. "You were wrong, though—I could. It was quite easy. Don't be angry. I want a little business with that fellow over there." He pointed at me with an accusing finger. For a moment we all stared as though the clerk were a conjurer. Then Beatrix's aunt remembered.

"Then you were not smiling at me?" she demanded.

"Certainly not." He looked at her narrowly. "I didn't see you. If I had I might have smiled, but I didn't see you."

The aunt gave a sniff. Miss Vandeleur turned to me.

"Deen!" she said. In future I shall reserve my Christian name for private

conversations only. Its use is so often misconstrued. Beatrix glared, simply glared.

"How do you do, Miss Vandeleur?" I said. I dared not glance at her. I have no doubt she looked surprised and hurt; but what else was I to say? I am sure Beatrix would not have cared for any more friendly style of address. "As for you," I went on, speaking to the clerk, and winking violently at him when I could without fear of observation, "you must have made a mistake. I don't know you."

"That's all right," he said, winking back. "You are all alike, you gentlemen. It doesn't matter about knowing us as long as we know you." He pulled out the blue document from his vest pocket as he spoke. "'Deen Vernon, Esquire.' You *do* answer to that name?"

"Ah, your master wants to see me, no doubt," I said. "I will give you a message in the hall." I tried to get near enough to kick him, but he had been too well trained in my miserable plan.

"No; if it's all the same to you I would rather serve you with this in the presence of witnesses. In *re* Marblows *versus* Marblows and Vernon."

"Marblows!" Beatrix's voice was cold and biting. "Do I understand that this is for you, Deen? Who is Marblows? And what does it all mean?"

"It's a divorce suit." The clerk smiled placidly through it all.

"A what?" both girls cried.

"A divorce suit—Mr. Vernon here being co-respondent. They do say—" he commenced, with an insinuating grin.

"Silence, man!" Beatrix's aunt sailed down majestically on the clerk, who backed until he tripped over the mat at the door. "Silence before these two innocent, outraged girls! As for you," she added, fiercely, to me, "Go!"

And I went. It seemed the best thing to do under the circumstances.



THE DAY'S END

By Theodosia Garrison

BELOVED, our time of love was as a day—
Faint dawn-break and the noon's fierce flush of light,
And twilight, like a witch bloom, strange and gray,
Unfolding to the night.

Faint dawn-break—how we watched it, you and I!
First through the green a soaring bird-note sprung,
A color caught in crimson on the sky,
And our hands clasped and clung.

And there was sudden dawning in your eyes—
A prescience of wonders that would be,
When the veiled heart of you should thrill and rise,
Of all disguise made free.

The hour of noon—ah, sweet, how swift it came!
The full sun and the silence, when we two
Saw Love revealed and through his eyes of flame
Looked, understood—and knew.

In the white light, the shadowless, vast space,
What could be held or hidden, each from each?
Oh, as my lips were still upon your face,
Our souls were loud with speech.

How long ago it was—since shadowwise
Spread the slow twilight through the darkling land.
And weariness is heavy in your eyes
And in your listless hand.

And somber with the warning of the night
The ragged cloud edge drags upon the hill;
And in your voice there wakes a note of fright,
And wan your face and chill.

Love and day die, yet have we known their best.
Once more your lips—nay, look and laugh and lean:
See where the one rift burns across the west,
To show that day has been.

STOLEN SWEETS

I NEVER smoke a cigarette
 But comes the recollection
 Of one who—I can see her yet—
 Could make them to perfection.
 A pretty girl, with laughing eyes
 And mouth most kiss-provoking,
 A rosebud! In that rosebud lies
 The reason for my smoking.

Around each small tobacco-roll
 The memory still lingers
 Of her and of the time I stole
 The first one from her fingers.
 She made some comment on a dunce,
 Then, laughingly, she beckoned
 For more tobacco, and at once
 Began to roll a second.

Between her dainty finger-tips
 She fashioned it to please me;
 Then held it to her rosebud lips,
 And lighted it to tease me.
 "Now, possibly you may steal this,"
 Said she, "you've grown so foxy."
 I did, and got a rosebud's kiss—
 A kind of kiss by proxy.

FELIX CARMEN.



THE REPLY UNKIND

BENHAM—I have a good deal on my mind.

MRS. BENHAM—You haven't as much as you used to have before you began getting bald.



SUCH A DREAM!

MRS. DEARLY—I dreamed last night I had such a perfectly lovely new hat!

MR. DEARLY—That's the first dream of a hat you ever had that didn't cost me money.

THE BURGLARS

By Temple Bailey

"I AM awake," said the lady.

The burglar wheeled around and confronted the gaze of the unfrightened eyes. Then his hand went to his hip pocket.

"Are you a coward as well as a thief?" she asked, scornfully. He dropped his hand to his side, and stood undecided.

"Put them back!" She pointed an imperious finger at the dressing-table.

Out of a capacious pocket the burglar drew a rope of pearls, and threw it down amid the confusion of brushes and combs and powder-puffs and laces and ribbons.

As he did so he caught sight of a card on top of the jewel-case. "To my bride-to-be" was written on it, above the name of a well-known man of millions—an old man.

"Is that all?" asked the lady. She sat up on the couch. Her pale-blue gown fell about her in straight folds, the red-gold braids of her hair touched the floor. A photograph slid from her lap and lay face upward on the rug—a photograph worn with much handling.

The burglar reached inside his coat, and fished out a strip of blue ribbon on which glittered five diamond butterflies.

The lady drew a long breath. "Oh, those!" she said, and snatched them from him, eagerly.

"Is there nothing else?" she again demanded.

"That's all," said the burglar.

The lady went over to the dressing-table, and looked through the contents of the white velvet case.

"That's all," repeated the burglar.

But the lady continued her search. Presently she turned around and faced him.

"Where is the ring?" she questioned, sharply.

The burglar was embarrassed. "Oh, that," he said, nervously, "that cheap little thing?"

"It's worth more to me than all the rest!" she cried, and the pearls dropped at her feet, unheeded, as she crossed the room and came to where he stood on the hearth-rug.

"Give it to me!"

He opened his hand, and it lay in the palm—a little thin gold ring, set with a half-dozen cheap blue stones.

She took it from him, and slipped it on her finger, where it fitted tightly.

Then she sank into a deep chair, and motioned him to another. He seated himself on the extreme edge and looked at her uncomfortably.

"Why did you keep that ring, when there were others more valuable?"

"I wanted to give it away," he blurted out. "I didn't think you would hunt for it—it was so cheap!"

"To a girl?" she asked, softly.

He nodded, and then they both looked into the fire.

"You love her?" said the lady, at last.

His face blazed. "Yes," he answered, stoutly.

"Does she know you are a thief?" Her clear eyes were searching.

He moved restlessly, and his face hardened.

"Yes," he said again.

"And yet she loves you?"

Another nod, as a frown settled darkly over his visage.

Into her eyes there came a look of contempt.

"She must be a strange woman," she said, coldly.

"To love a thief?" There was danger in the controlled voice and danger in his somber eyes. "And yet men have loved you!"

Her eyes looked straight into his, surprised, wrathful.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

He laughed, recklessly.

"What do you give for those?" His arm swept out toward the jewel-covered table. "When I steal your pearls and diamonds I get something for nothing. When you take them from that old man, what do you give him in return?"

"How dare you! How dare you!" she cried. She sprang to her feet and paced the room.

Her foot touched the photograph, and she picked it up.

"I can't be poor!" She spoke to the burglar, but her eyes appealed to the face in the picture—the face of a young man.

"Neither can I," said the burglar; "we are two of a kind."

The lady drew herself up with dignity.

"You forget yourself."

The burglar laughed, insolently. "I forget nothing."

"But I would rather die than be poor." Again she appealed to the picture.

Then she tossed it on the couch and went swiftly to the dressing-table. She threw the rope of pearls over her head, and the long strands fell down over her blue gown. Then she pinned the butterflies in her hair, coronet fashion, and turned to the burglar.

"See," she cried, "they make me a queen!"

The burglar's breath was quickened at her wonderful fairness. "You don't need them," he said, hoarsely, and the words seemed forced from him. Then he pointed to the picture on the couch. "He don't think you do, does he?"

Her face was white, and her eyes

glowed. "No," she said, "no! But I can't marry him and be poor."

"No, you can't," said the burglar; "so you will marry the old man, and give him nothing. You do it for money, I do it for money. What's the difference?"

She slipped down on the rug in front of the fire. The light flashed on the diamonds and brought out all the beauty of her splendid hair. "There is no difference," she murmured, wearily.

For a long time she looked into the fire, while the burglar moved restlessly on the edge of his chair.

When she turned her face to him at last it was transformed. Out of the ashes of the queen's pride had risen the soul of a loving woman. She took off the pearls and the diamonds, and, last of all, she took off the little blue ring. She looked at it for a moment, then handed it to the burglar.

"Take it to her," she said. "It was given to me by one who will be glad—oh, so glad!—to give me another when I tell him of this night and of you. And when you give it to her," she went on, whimsically, "tell her it comes from a reformed thief."

The burglar got on his feet. "You look like her," he said, awkwardly. "That's why I have acted like such a fool."

She rose and stood beside him. "Let us reform together," she entreated.

He turned away, but she stretched out her white hand and laid it on his brown one. "Will you tell her that we reformed together?" she insisted.

"Yes," he said, and his voice had the ring of firm resolve.

He went to the window, and pushed open the shutter.

"Did you come that way?" asked the lady.

"Yes," he said.

"See, it is almost day," and she pointed to a strip of light in the east. As he swung himself over the sill, she reached down and slipped something into his pocket. "Begin with that,"

she urged, as he would have given it back; "at least, it is mine, and I'll divide. The jewels must go back to-day."

As he slid down softly into the dark-

ness, she leaned far out. "'Two of a kind,' my comrade," she whispered. Then she laughed, and her voice had in it the joyous freshness of the morning as she cried, gently, "Good-bye."



THE LOVE CHASE

YOU butterflies, now fan your wings
And signal all the sunny land;
Wave wild the news the glad wind sings:
I've touched my lady's hand!

Come, plume of fern and silken weed,
Harp sweetly to the air the while
It bears the tale from wold to mead:
I've seen my lady smile!

Ah, fall of foam and breath of bough
And silver fluting of the thrush,
Give all the world the dear news now:
I've watched my lady blush!

Now, soft, O noisy nightingale,
O trees, lean low and screen the way,
Nor moon nor midnight breathe the tale:
I kissed my love to-day!

ZONA GALE.



USEFUL

FIRST ACTOR—Here's a nice little gift sent to me by a friend just before my Western tour.

SECOND ACTOR—What is it?

"A pedometer."



FEMININE CRUELTY

AGATHA—How did you enjoy yourself at the ball?

PRISCILLA—Immensely! I watched the men who danced with me return to their wives.

FROM THE BOOK OF LOVE

THE sun shines not so brightly anywhere
 As on the radiant nimbus of your hair;
 Each golden thread becomes a living fire
 To burn upon the altar of my prayer.

Oh, I have chosen you, my love! my king!
 From all the world; for you I laugh and sing.
 Give me the dewy rose-leaves of your mouth,
 O blossom sweeter than the breath of Spring!

My love, the breathing marvel of your flesh!
 Like throbbing rose-leaves and as dewy-fresh
 And pure of touch! And this pale flower is dust—
 Sweet dust that holds your spirit in its mesh.

Your warm, soft eyes are deeper than the sea;
 In their rapt vision burns the memory
 Of untold eons that your soul has known—
 Your prisoned soul of flame and wizardry.

Your dear white feet are moistened with my tears.
 Oh, what rose-shrouded thorns, what spectral fears
 Lurk for their toilsome passing in the dark,
 Along the tragic pathway of the years!

ELSA BARKER.



A POSSIBLE CONTINGENCY

SHE—Don't you think it would be nicer to take our wedding trip later, when we are better acquainted with each other?

HE—But then we might not want to go together.



THESE SOCIAL PARADOXES

POLLY—Auntie says you made yourself horribly conspicuous at the musicale last night.

DOLLY (*young and ingénue*)—Well, I'd like to know what she'd call inconspicuous! George and I were quite out of sight, clear around the turn in the stairs, the whole evening!

A SWIRL OF DUST

By John Regnault Ellyson

FOR several days preceding the first Monday in last September the weather had been exceedingly hot. Early that morning the temperature fell. Four hours after the sun had risen the air was calm and cool, and people who had wished for a change now shivered and complained. Those on the street at noon noted the lurid, vapory masses that piled up in the sky, and the light that resembled the light of an eclipse. It seemed as if there might be a great storm, but it ended in high winds and much dust. The winds blew furiously, piped and brawled, swayed the trees, flapped the blinds, set signs in motion, put men out of temper, and stirred the dust. The sting was in the dust, which drifted and swirled everywhere; it besprinkled the hair, got between the flesh and the clothes, burned the eyes and lashed the skin like hail; it came in clouds, rose from all quarters, descended in showers, and for a time made of Andova a petty Sahara.

Brown as a fox and restless as the wind, Casper Nicholas, the attorney, beat forward against the storm, nimbly, in spite of his years. He was hardly the one to be daunted by the sweep of the wind and the dust, though he could not remember the like of it. He had himself raised winds in the world, and drawn fine grain out of dust-holes. Many things had come his way, unsought and unbidden, and continued to come, as chanced that morning in the storm.

Rounding Chapple's corner, he turned into Chenner street. At the moment, as a hat spun at his feet, he stooped and quickly caught the dancing derby

that the owner, a gentleman seen but in outline, claimed and accepted at his hands with thanks, then passed on hastily.

Scarcely had the attorney taken more than a dozen steps before a crushed slouch hat bounded between his legs, and another gentleman, whose face he could only guess, smiled and thanked him for the favor, and tripped forward with the wind's speed.

The dry and aged attorney, whom ordinarily nothing surprised, who, moreover, had other topics in mind, would never have considered the similarity of the two incidents, if near the end of the block he had not somehow found a third hat, a silk beaver, rolling toward him, and if he had not again discovered in the dust in front of him a third gentleman, though all he could see of this last was a conspicuous posy of white pansies on the lapel of his coat. Once more there were three words spoken, then the two were parted by the wind and the dust.

"Remarkable, very remarkable, indeed—extremely remarkable!" muttered the attorney, as he walked on a few paces further.

Then he entered, by a single step above the level of the street, a suite of dull offices, quiet chambers in which, as he often avowed, he had faithfully served the public for half a century. Here he had himself brushed by a lean, pimpled lad, while commenting on the sweepings of the gale. He bathed his face and hands, combed his lank locks before a small broken mirror, and sat down and read what letters had arrived by the recent post.

Meanwhile, the winds lulled, the clouds scattered and the sun appeared. The attorney, glancing at the clock, gathered some papers in a green bag, then set out and retraced his steps in the manner of a man bent on important affairs.

Now, on the third block beyond that in which the aged attorney had encountered the three hats, and toward which point the three gentlemen, each unaware of the existence of the others, were moving on eagerly, halting only to be cleaned of the dust, stood a large dwelling-house, built after the substantial English fashion of long ago; but not in any way notable, except for the fact that the great oak door flew back on its hinges almost as soon as the bell sounded.

The very simple reason of this eccentricity was that the venerable mistress of the mansion had, some ten years before, lost a dear brother by the delay of a servant in answering the bell. The accident happened in this wise: the brother of the lady, then ill in his chamber, hearing the door-bell ring with some force, and again a moment after with increased violence, rose from bed, and, going across the room, raised one of the windows as best he could. He thrust out his head, when suddenly the heavy sash gave way under his feeble hold, and came down with a crash that well-nigh severed his neck. It was truly a most lamentable shock to the good dame, his sister, but everybody agreed that it resulted happily for all callers, as afterward the door opened almost at the instant the bell was touched.

The first gentleman who presented himself at the Endor mansion found, therefore, immediate entrance. He advanced with a slightly sidelong motion, gliding as smoothly as if stepping on sward. Not an individual of many words, he merely announced his name. The name, no less than the person of the stranger, staggered the black butler. The visitor was being ushered into the parlor on the right of the hall, when the door-bell rang once more, but with

a louder jangle. The lady of the house, standing at the foot of the bed and alone in her chamber, had an attack of nerves in consequence of the seeming negligence of the servant, and feverishly pulled the bell-rope hanging from the wall near by, whereupon the maid down-stairs hurried out of the dining-room and mounted the staircase, just in time to see the butler admit the second gentleman, who, cool and swaggering, strutted down the hall as if very much at home. In a moment, however, the bell rang and resounded anew, and the butler, his limbs quivering, his brain turning like a top, fumbled at the knob. As the door opened, he fell behind it, slipping completely out of sight of the newcomer—the last of the trio of phantoms; for as such the servant viewed the singular figures of the three guests.

When the maid reached the chamber on the second floor, there was no one to be seen there. She looked toward the cushioned rocker, toward the lounge, toward the *prie-dieu* between the windows. She could see no one at all, and yet she could hear a small voice murmuring faintly. But, after moving from point to point, she found her mistress by the bed, in the shadow of the foot-board. The poor lady's legs had yielded under the light burden of her body, and there she was crouching, partly seated and partly kneeling on the floor against the wall. She held her rosary in one hand and the broken bell-rope in the other; she was sobbing, chattering, laughing at the same time in queer little bird-notes, which were musical and wild.

The maid tenderly lifted her into a chair, opened her smelling-salts, spoke softly and soothed her, stroking her slim white hands.

"The bell!—I think the bell is still ringing."

"No, no, madam, no."

"Child, what is going on below?"

"Nothing, madam, only some callers. Did madam expect some callers?"

"Mr. Nicholas was coming at noon to-day."

"And some gentlemen with him?"

"Yes, it may be; but I cannot remember."

"While I was dressing you an hour ago you spoke of some gentlemen, too, and of some business you knew nothing of——"

"I think so—I am not sure."

"Mr. Nicholas hasn't got here, but the gentlemen are here."

"What gentlemen, dear; what gentlemen?"

"Those, I say, you spoke of. There are two, perhaps, or more. One was at the door, and walked into the hall, as I came up-stairs. He was well-dressed, and he had white pansies on his breast."

"Good Mother, have mercy on us!" cried the lady, in a tremor; "white—white pansies, did you say?"

"A black suit and white pansies."

"You saw him? And—you never saw him before?"

"I thought so, indeed."

"How? Was he large or small?"

"No taller than I—'twas the canary, madam, rustling his wings—small for a man, clean-shaven and dark."

"Ah, my child; and how did he bear himself?"

"He walked into the hall like one who owned the house."

"Put your arms around me, darling. I am cold, so cold! He comes—my delight, my desire! and yet—and yet, how soon!"

"What is he, madam? Who is this you speak of?"

The lady made no reply in words; she lifted her finger and pointed at the portrait of her brother that hung above the mantel, and the maid instantly paled and gave a start, for there was, in fact, quite a marked resemblance between the features of the painted figure, its clothes, the vivid white pansies on the dark coat, and those of the visitor.

"Truly," said the maid, betraying unconsciously the moment's thought, "truly, the very same." And then she quickly added: "Yes, but younger and, if I may say, handsomer."

"My brother, my brother, my dear,

dear brother," murmured the lady, and she held out her hands as though welcoming some one moving within the compass of her vision.

Then the lady's head dropped back spasmodically, and her limbs relaxed. The maid hastily gathered the limp form in her arms, crossed the room, laid her mistress at full length on the lounge, and looked down on her with a kind of pathetic affection. One might have said, seeing her thus so still, so pale, that the mistress of the mansion would breathe no more; the hands, the throat, the face—except where the cheeks glowed with an artificial coloring—resembled in whiteness the petals of old-time wax flowers.

As the butler uttered a groan and tumbled behind the open door, the gentleman near the entrance, the gentleman at the threshold of the parlor and the gentleman already in the hallway glanced forward, and in one another their eyes met a rare sight, even for our amazing era. In truth, each appeared the mirrored image, the model of the others. All three were of a size—not broad, not tall, shapely rather and sinewy; and of an age—within the early, ripe season of the forties; not gray or jaded—well-winded and alert, indeed, and strong; more dark than fair, yet scarcely anywise somber, lacquered healthily with sun-bronze. The hair curled close about their rounded heads, and their lips and chins were shaven clean; their ears flapped out—bad pictorially, but finely curved for sound. Each had sharp eyes, the Saxon jaw, the conquering Roman nose; one was dressed in black, one in drab and one in brown.

"So there are others—as I had guessed," said the man at the newel-post. He was of those who harbor and express no great surprise.

"The cards are getting mixed," thought the man on the threshold of the parlor. He had a still tongue, and loved the game.

"Which of us am I?" queried the man at the door. He chuckled like a joker as he spoke.

For a moment they hung back in their places, then approached the centre of the fore-hall and gazed each at the others more or less intently.

The cool one, who took things as they came, hummed the refrain of a vaudeville song; the silent one, from a habit that was his, neither parted his lips nor showed his hand; the last, facetious and inquisitive, laughed aloud and asked questions. The mystery, in some measure at least, was about to be explained, when all three turned on the arrival of a person who had mounted the steps and now lifted his hat—the old attorney named Casper Nicholas.

"Good morning, gentlemen," said he.

The three strangers saluted the attorney.

"Pardon me if I have kept you waiting," he added. "I am a little delayed by the storm. I have lived in Andova many long years, and never have I seen such another carnival of wind and dust——"

"A devilish, dirty dust," said the waggish individual, who continued laughing; "but more devilish strange than the dust is the dilemma that here follows. You look wise; come in, by all means, and give us light. You see here, sir, three of a feather—very much alive, somewhat alike and yet altogether unknown; and here we meet for the first time, as if blown in a bunch by the wind and hatched out of the city's dust. I come at the bidding of one Nicholas, attorney—come from over seas, from Yokohama, in Japan; and I come concerning myself in the matter of my father's will."

"And so do I, but not so far," said the cool one; "I come from England, from Richmond on the Thames."

"And I from Denver," said the third, briefly.

The attorney listened attentively, arching his brow and puckering his mouth.

"Gentlemen," said he, after a pause, "I think we have here present all parties in the cause, save only the good lady of the house. Let us now

get this fool, the butler, on his legs, and have the lady here."

So saying, he gave a hand to the old servant, set him upon his feet, and bade him go at once to summon his mistress.

"Pray step into the parlor, gentlemen," observed the attorney to the strangers, leading the way.

The butler, however, instead of seeking his mistress and announcing the guests, wobbled aimlessly down the hall, like a creature in a stupor.

The maid regarded the cold, still figure of the dame with tenderness, but she lost not a moment in loosening the collar, chafing the pale hands, and doing the hundred little services that experience suggests. The lady, whose blood soon warmed and flowed again freely in her delicate veins, raised her eyelids, looked bewildered; then sighed, drank the ammonia and water from the glass set at her lips, rallied, and asked what had happened. The maid, who was of the pretty, emotional, ingenious, modern, somewhat cultured sort, who make themselves beloved, smiled reassuringly, and soothed her mistress.

"As I sat at your side on the lounge," said she, "talking of the visit of Mr. Nicholas and the gentlemen, you dozed off sweetly, all at once."

"I dozed? Did I sleep long?"

"You slept only a moment or so."

"I must have slept longer; I feel refreshed. How strange! I fancied my dear—really, I dreamed I was sitting yonder in the chair, and my brother came in. What is the sign, my child, when we dream of the dead?"

"They say when we dream of the dead, madam, there will be rain."

"There, there! I hear voices."

"The voices of the callers, madam."

"Ah! Yes, I can stand alone very well—very well, you see. Why, dear, my collar's unfastened! Susan, arrange my dress. Are my ringlets disarrayed, child? Get me my hand-glass. I pray nothing unusual will

occur. That is better; it looks very much better."

"Will madam change her slippers?"

"Oh, I grow so forgetful now."

"How can madam say so?—madam, who remembers everything."

"My pretty child! Yes, my green velvet slippers embroidered with white pansies. Why hasn't the butler been here—where can he be? Hush! I think I hear Mr. Nicholas's voice—ah, it must be his! Do I look well, my dear? Why did he speak discursively and not directly, or doesn't he really know? I wonder what it all means? Tell me, is the day auspicious or not? Search for my rosary, my child."

"Your beads were here—there, madam, you have them in your hand."

"Ah, so I have."

"Would madam have a drop of wine—just a little drop?"

"Just a thimble of sherry, yes. Does the color appear natural, dear?"

"Lifelike, madam; not a bit too much."

"Hush! Susan, I am sure Mr. Nicholas is below, but the voices are all faint, and they sound so oddly. How my heart beats! Do I seem ruffled, excited?"

"Not in the least, madam."

"And now I feel strong again."

"Madam has such excellent nerves."

"Do you think so, child? I hear—ah, Mr. Nicholas is calling. Go to the rail and say that I shall be down at once. Now we must go; assist me—come, we will go down immediately. Be very careful, Susan—I would not stumble for the world! Steady, my child!—did your foot slip? So! It is you—it is you who are nervous! How prettily you blush, child, and what fine, high color!"

The attorney, returning from the hall, had conversed but a brief while with the three gentlemen, when Miss Endor entered the parlor. In the twilight of this room everything seemed dim except where the small mound of red coals burned in the grate, or where the sun glowed be-

tween the heavy orange-hued damask curtains. Reed-like and quaint, frail and none too firm, the hostess appeared, leaning on the arm of the maid. She wore a beautiful gown of flowered silk, and moved with a certain slow, coquettish, old-fashioned grace. The three strangers got up and stood silently in front of their chairs, comparing at a glance the emaciated figure of the mistress with the full, shapely outlines of the maid. The attorney rose and stepped forward, alertly.

"My good Miss Endor!"

"My dear Mr. Nicholas!"

They bowed very graciously.

"We have here, madam," said the attorney, "we have here three kinsmen of yours."

The lady grasped her companion's arm more closely, and the beads of the rosary in her fingers rattled as she brought them against her bosom.

"Permit me," added he; "this is Mr. Nathan Endor; this is Mr. Moses Endor, and this is Mr. Jacob Endor."

The lady, despite her surprise, gave them a formal salutation.

"They are actors," observed the attorney, pausing as he stooped to recover the handkerchief he had dropped.

The venerable lady stiffened slightly, and elevated her head.

"They are actors," continued the attorney, "actors in a marvelous comedy. The play has begun, and heaven only knows where it will end. I am thought to be learned in the law, most estimable madam, and certainly the law has profound intricacies and takes perplexing turns, but destiny, I can assure you, unfolds much more wonderful complications. As regards the matter in hand, the very heart of the matter, madam, I am really in the dark; I am like the infant dangling in the nurse's arms! I know little or nothing—I simply wonder. But be not alarmed; nay, I beseech you, be not in the least agitated! Let us hope—let us hope, indeed, for the best. There's one point, I think, I can vouch for—one

point I cannot ignore. Here, truly, madam," said he, nodding toward the strangers, "here are the three sons of my dear friend, of your beloved brother!"

"Why, Mr. Nicholas!" protested the lady, but she could say no more.

"I know this, and about all I do know is that this seems perfectly true!"

"Ah! I see! . . . Bless me, my child, how my head swims!"

The attorney offered his hand, and by his aid and the maid's, the lady reached a low chair near the centre of the room. She sank among its cushions, drooped her head, inhaled the pungent odor of the vinaigrette; then, refreshed and revived, she straightened her figure, arranged the flow of her gown, and quietly folded her hands in her lap.

Seeing that the lady, somewhat more at ease, had no need of further assistance and that the gentlemen had already seated themselves, Mr. Nicholas sat down at a short distance from the lady's chair and directly in front of her three kinsmen.

"Now, madam," resumed he, "since in any situation it is best to make the most of what little we know, I shall first tell you, as briefly as possible, of a trivial incident that occurred one year after you came to dwell in Andova and nine years prior to the demise of my old friend, your devoted brother—or rather of a turn it took, if I may so express myself, for the mere incident of my visit here was in no wise unusual or remarkable, and would doubtless have passed out of mind, if your brother had not related on that occasion an extremely startling bit of information. I remember well it was evening, a blustering, stormy evening in October, but we sat snugly by the library fire—he in his red-tasseled cap and smoking-gown, his chair drawn close and touching mine, with a pot of hot punch at his elbow. Good comrades and grave, we sat there, each with glass in hand, chatting familiarly of a sad marital discord then being aired in the courts.

Suddenly, in the midst of our talk, quite suddenly, he turned—I can see him now, as he bent forward and put his finger on my knee. Looking up and smiling—your brother seldom smiled, but did anyone, madam, ever have such a sly twinkle of great, rich humor in his eye?—I say, he looked up and smiled and spoke—confessed, in a word, that some thirty-odd years before, he himself had married. And this was all. Unfortunately, this was all he said, for the statement, simple and direct as were all his statements, was truly so very astonishing, considering his deep-rooted sentiments and oft-repeated views on matrimony, that my amazement at the moment upset his calculations, whatever they happened to be, and he paused at that particular point—and never referred to the subject again. Thus, in the interval of catching my breath, I not only gained a significant piece of intelligence, but I lost the details of a very singular and interesting story."

"So he was married," observed Miss Endor; "at first I had fears——"

"Groundless fears, madam, groundless fears! I think the fact cannot be fairly disputed. But, madam, you must also be now informed that when your brother's will was probated there was a codicil."

"A codicil? Indeed!"

"A codicil, madam, drawn by his own hand, with text unknown to me or to others, sealed and placed in my keeping, and to be opened according to his wishes on this day of September, a half-score of years precisely after the day on which he died. In a detached packet, addressed to me, sealed, too, and in his own writing duly signed, he directed that at the specified time I should communicate with his three sons—'whom,' to use his own words, 'he had separated while young and planted at the ends of the earth'—and that I should bring them to Andova and assemble them in your presence, and here acquaint all parties with

the provisions of the said document."

In the silence that followed no sound could be heard but the slow, dull ticking of the great hall-clock. Nothing rustled in the room, and nobody murmured; nobody moved or seemed to breathe, save the aged attorney, who leaned aside and clutched the folds of his long green bag. But, when he raised the bag upon his lap, it gave out a light, purring noise, as if there were life in the dead leaves, as if the papers whispered while he dipped in among them, and drew forth at last a parcel bound with pink tape and secured with numerous seals.

Carefully shifting the bag to the floor, the attorney set his glasses on his nose, and, wetting his fingers, cracked the seals, broke the wrappings and held up the mysterious inner document. He smiled benignly, rose, approached one of the windows and, after perching himself there in the light, he asked leave first to skim the contents of the paper.

While his eyes ran over the lines, the attorney, it was observed, shuddered perceptibly, quickly lifted and lowered his head, grew extremely pale and red by turns, and then grew livid. In the next moment, without excuse or comment, he got on his feet, let slip the document, ploughed across the apartment, seized his hat and bag in passing, and plunged through the door, like one pursued by a troop of fiends.

The gentleman nearest the attorney's empty chair—the soft-mannered gentleman of few words—secured the fallen paper, and, standing where the light was strongest, drew in his breath and absorbed the letter and spirit of the codicil, flushed to the edges of his flashing eyes, and departed hurriedly, scattering as he went a series of most terrible oaths.

The document, meanwhile, fluttering on the floor, passed into the hands of the calm gentleman who had kept so exceedingly cool, and he, in satis-

fying his curiosity, lost his immaculate temper, uttered various imprecations, and made his exit in such a manner as to jostle the bric-à-brac and the pictures on the wall.

Then the pleasant-humored gentleman, who had repeatedly laughed, and who now smiled at the singularity of the scene, caught the document playfully, as a child catches a painted ball, examined it attentively, rolled it suddenly between his palms, and thrust it into the embers of the grate, in which he ground his heel. Then, turning, he set his lips firmly and quitted the room, without a word and without a smile.

"The codicil! The codicil!" cried the lady, rising in a great flurry.

"There—one moment, madam," said the maid, bending over the grate.

"Quick, quick, child, for the love of heaven!"

"See, madam, dear—see, the paper's safe!"

"Bless me," sobbed the lady, "had it burned, I think I should have died!"

The maid at some pains adjusted the old lady's glasses in proper place, knelt at her feet, steadied her trembling hands, and listened while the good lady read aloud these words:

I, Phineas Endor, of the city of Andova, in the State of Virginia, having made my last will on the twenty-fourth of June, eighteen hundred and ninety-one, do hereby declare this present writing to be a codicil to my will and a part thereof, and I do further declare the same is now drawn that I may cause myself to live long in the memory of my old comrade, hereafter mentioned, and in the memory of my three children, herein duly named—sons by my wife, St. Cecilia de Foe Endor, otherwise known as the Witch of Endor, since in the fourth year after our marriage she decamped mysteriously with one P. Saul, and left nothing behind save the said sons.

Therefore:

To my eldest son, Nathan, I bequeath the celebrated fountains of my youth in the land of Pell-Mell, and all my castles in Spain;

Therefore:

To my second son, Moses, I bequeath one bottle of my elixir of love, my mermaid from the Isle of Rat-a-tat and all my ships at sea;

Therefore:

To my younger son, Jacob, I bequeath my personal shadow that followed me through so many perils, all my whims and dreams and the cream of all my jokes, my favorite mare's-nest, and all the needles that he may find in all my haystacks;

And therefore:

To that sly dog and shriveled knave, Casper Nicholas, attorney-at-law, who cordially robbed me during half my life, and who doubtless will lament my death, I yield back all his riff-raff saws and legal fiddle-faddle, and add thereunto a cloven

hoof for luck, a nose-ring for his eagle-beak, a pot of grease for his itching fingers, and likewise a new green bag filled with goose-quills and wheels-within-wheels, resources and devil's dues and plays-at-cross-purposes; and I further bequeath to him a full set of my old false teeth, that he may be able properly to digest his pleasure at the perusal of these various articles, to which and hereupon I set my hand and seal, this thirteenth day of August, in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-one.

PHINEAS ENDOR.

[SEAL.]



WHY IS IT?

YOUR ink may be greasy and lumpy and faint,
 Sufficient to drive you to drink;
 But the fellow who writes himself down as a fool
 Finds out the indelible ink.
 Your envelopes slowly will open themselves,
 The stamps will depart from them, too,
 But the fellow who's stuck on himself has been stuck
 With prize undetachable glue.



WHY HE DIDN'T GET HER

PROSPECTIVE FATHER-IN-LAW—Do you ever gamble or smoke, sir?
 PROSPECTIVE SON-IN-LAW—No, sir!
 PROSPECTIVE FATHER-IN-LAW—Do you ever drink, sir?
 PROSPECTIVE SON-IN-LAW (*absent-mindedly*)—Well, I don't care if I do, sir.



THE UNDISPUTED POINTS

ATTORNEY FOR THE DEFENSE—You are a blackguard and a bluff, sir!
 ATTORNEY FOR THE PROSECUTION—And you, sir, are a shyster and a rogue!
 THE COURT—Come, come, gentlemen. Let us get down to the disputed points of this case.



THE foolish girl sighs to be the first in a man's life; the wise woman seeks to be the last.

THE IDYL OF THE BEECH-TREE

By Madison Cawein

BENEATH an old beech-tree
They sat together;
Fair as a flower was she,
Of Summer weather.
They spoke of life and love,
While, through the boughs above,
The sunlight, like a dove,
Dropped many a feather.
Beneath an old beech-tree
They sat together.

And there the violet,
The bluet near it,
Made blurs of azure wet—
As if some spirit,
Or woodland dream, had gone
Sprinkling the earth with dawn,
When only fay and faun
Could see or hear it.
There bloomed the violet,
The bluet near it.

She, with her young, sweet face,
And eyes gray-beaming,
Made of that forest place
A spot for dreaming;
A spot for Oreads
To smooth their nut-brown braids,
For Dryads of the glades
To dance in, gleaming.
She with her young, sweet face
And eyes gray-beaming.

So dim the place, so blest,
One had not wondered
Had Dian's moonèd breast
The deep leaves sundered,
And there a quiet while
On them had deigned to smile,
While down some forest aisle
The far hunt thundered.
So dim the place, so blest,
One had not wondered.

THE SMART SET

She, with her face and form,
 Made that a garden;
 Filled it with grace and charm,
 Changed it to Arden:
 The flowers hid elfin eyes;
 The trees did but disguise
 A something good and wise,
 A whispering warden.
 She, with her face and form,
 Made that a garden.

I deem that hour, perchance,
 Was but a mirror
 To show them earth's romance,
 And draw them nearer;
 A mirror where, meseems,
 All that this earth-life dreams,
 All loveliness that gleams,
 The soul sees clearer.
 I deem that hour, perchance,
 Was but a mirror.

Beneath an old beech-tree,
 They dreamed of blisses;
 Fair as a flower was she,
 That Summer kisses;
 They spoke of dreams and days,
 Of love that goes and stays,
 Of all for which life prays,
 Ah me! and misses.
 Beneath an old beech-tree
 They dreamed of blisses.



COMFORTS OF HOME

MRS. BRIGHT—I don't understand, Henry, about this wireless telegraphy.
 How would I know when I was going to get a message; and how would
 I be able to know what it was, if I did get it; and how would I know anything
 about it?

HENRY (*looking at her over his paper*)—Good Lord!



“ALL men are liars:” but it is safer to tell them so collectively rather than
 individually.



MOST of us know how to say nothing; few of us know when.

MY LORD AND LADY

By Ralph Henry Barbour

WE were seventeen around the table that night at Kenyon Oaks. I am counting the host, Sir Roger—an unusual procedure, since no one, not even his wife, ever does count him in anything.

"Oh, pray don't mind Chuckles," she will protest. "Leave him to his guns; he'd much rather you would, you know."

So Sir Roger is usually left with his guns, a fact that pleases him vastly. Sir Roger collects guns; he has rooms full of them, each in its mahogany case glinting dully along the length of its polished barrel. Tradition says that Sir Roger has never used one in all his fifty years; and I have been assured that he could not bring down a pheasant at two yards. He possesses firearms of every description, preferring, however, the accumulation of rifles and shotguns. He has some costing—but, there! I am afraid to say how much. And, after all, it does not matter, for what I have to tell does not concern him.

I had taken in Lady Cicely Grey, an honor I would gladly have relinquished to another. For the mere fact of being an American, the author of a peculiarly dry work on Borneo and an F.R.G.S., does not necessarily imply conversational ability. I am sure Lady Cicely Grey, if she remembers my existence, will readily agree to this.

She was, and I trust still is, a wonderfully beautiful woman, tall, slender without being thin, bronze of hair, and possessing that marvelous red-and-white coloring which we in the States call the English complexion.

She impressed me at once as being a woman who had got most of what life has to offer, and had found it disappointing. Not that she exhibited symptoms of pessimism; on the contrary, her expression was usually one of unruffled calm. But such is the impression I received, and my impressions are sometimes correct.

I rearranged the silver at my place to my liking, and turned toward her. Had I been at home and unaware of her nationality, I should have asked her whether she thought English Winters more severe than those of Boston. She showed much of that polite hauteur which marks the feminine resident of the Hub. As it was, I spoke of the shooting—which, by the way, had been miserable that day—and she responded with a remark that clearly implied: "Please, if you have nothing to say, leave me to my thoughts, which, I assure you, sir, are far more interesting than yours." It was not a snub, but it sufficed. I turned in desperation to my left-hand neighbor, the canon's wife. She was talking rapidly in a rasping falsetto to a young barrister, who—but I have forgotten just what he had done; it was important, however, and made him a man of prominence. I went back to my soup, and wished that English country houses were steam-heated; I detest shivers around my spine.

Presently I heard Lady Cicely's mellow voice. I roused myself, and looked up quickly to reply. Alas! her head was turned from me, and I saw only a piled-up mass of burnished hair that was like red bronze in the light from the candelabra.

"You came down this afternoon?" she was asking.

"Yes, twenty after two, from Charing Cross."

The man's voice pleased me immensely. Its deep timbre told me at once that he was well over six feet, and had muscles. Being a small-statured collection of nerves myself, I naturally admire height and strength. I craned my head forward to see him, and caught a fleeting glimpse of a long, straight nose, two healthy-colored cheek-bones, a pair of handsome brown eyes and a rather straggling yellow mustache. I liked what I saw. After that, save for one or two perfunctory exchanges of common-places with the canon's lady, I played eavesdropper to the conversation on my right.

"And you," he asked, "you have been here all week?"

"Since Tuesday."

"They told me at the house you were away. I thought they said in Wessex."

"I had intended going to the Maltesers for a fortnight; but, of course, after their bereavement, it was out of the question."

"What is it? You know I only reached London yesterday. Up in the Highlands one doesn't hear things."

"Really? Hughie—he was the second son, you know—died last week, somewhere abroad. It is very sad. Grace is heartbroken; I think he was her favorite."

"Of course," he muttered. "Very sad. I think I remember the lad; thin, dark chap; awfully quiet; looked—er—weak, eh?"

"Yes, that was Hughie; a dear boy. The elder son, Courtney, is in the army."

"I know. Regular beast. I've met him."

"I fear he's not very nice," answered Lady Cicely, softly. "But what can one expect? You know what the father is."

"By Jove! I should rather think so! I heard a new story about him

last week from Guernsey of the Fourteenth." The man paused and laughed deeply. Then he coughed, embarrassed. "Fancy you wouldn't care for it, though," he muttered.

"Probably not, if Mr. Guernsey told it," answered Lady Cicely, quietly and a trifle coldly.

"Come, now, I say! Guernsey's not such a bad sort, 'pon my honor; a bit—er—rough, you know."

"Yes."

Lady Cicely gazed calmly about the table. I offered her olives. She said: "Thank you, no." Then she turned her back hair toward me again.

"You had a pleasant stay?"

"Scotland? Yes, so—so. Beastly crowd there; slept in a sort of out-building. That reminds me—remember Burdenthorp?"

"Very well."

"Oh!" The man paused as though in surprise. Then: "Have you seen him lately?"

"Not very."

"Ah!" Another pause. The man's voice sank a little, and was not so pleasant to the ear. "See much of him nowadays?"

"Very little." Lady Cicely's tones were calmly indifferent. She might have been speaking of—of me! The man hemmed, gruffly.

"Well, that's all right, you know. I heard—that is, somebody said——"

"Mr. Guernsey?" Lady Cicely's voice was icy.

"Well—yes, it was Guernsey, but——"

"Then never mind what he said, please; it doesn't matter."

"By Jove! but maybe it does matter!" The man's voice was wrathful.

Lady Cicely sipped her claret. "Not a particle. Mr. Guernsey can have nothing to say about me——"

"And Burdenthorp!"

"—and Mr. Burdenthorp—that can interest me in the least."

"Well—" The man paused and drank deep from his glass. "Then—there's nothing—in it?"

"Whatever it was, nothing. I hardly think it necessary for you

to ask. Why should you? It isn't as though you cared."

"Oh, I say, now! That's not fair!"

Lady Cicely made no answer. There was a long silence. Then: "The children are well?" asked the man, restrainedly.

"Quite. Alfred had some trouble with his throat last month, but it has disappeared now. Mel is staying with her aunt Alice for a few days."

"Hum!" said the man.

"Margey is going into long dresses in the Spring," went on Lady Cicely.

"Fancy! Long dresses!" exclaimed the man. "I say, how old is Margey now?"

"Fifteen in May; but I think she looks older."

"By Jove! Fifteen?" I knew the man was looking at Lady Cicely during the little pause that followed. Lady Cicely was looking at her hostess. "Fancy you having a daughter that old; you—you don't look it, you know!" There was warmth in his tones. The slim hand next to me stirred uneasily.

"Thank you," said Lady Cicely. "Shall you stay here long?" she added.

"Until Wednesday, I fancy. And you?"

"I leave Monday. I have promised next week to Lady Thierwell."

"Couldn't you—I say, I wish you'd stay on here awhile, eh? I don't see much of you lately."

"No, we don't meet very often, do we? But I fear I can't disappoint Lady Thierwell even—" I thought I caught a trace of irony in her voice—"even for you."

The man muttered something. Then he spoke aloud. "Well, let's have a bit of a talk after dinner, eh? You—er—you don't mind?"

The hostess gave the signal, and there was a deal of rustling from silken skirts. Lady Cicely rose.

"I fear it will be short, then," she answered, smiling very calmly. I didn't like that smile. "We are to dance, you know."

I had jumped to my feet, but the man was before me at the door.

"Damn dancing!" he muttered.

He stood very straight, very handsome, one hand on the open portal, the other tugging vexedly at his yellow mustache. Lady Cicely swept by him, acknowledging the courtesy with a little gracious, smiling inclination of her head.

"I shall look for you," said the man, in lowered tones. Whether she heard him I do not know. He went back to his seat, and scowlingly reached for the decanter. I slid my chair up to that of the prominent barrister who had done something.

"Pardon me," I said, "but who is my neighbor there on the right?"

"That?" The barrister stared over his glasses. "Why, that's Lord Colton Grey."

"Ah!" I said. "Any relation to Lady Grey?"

The barrister looked surprised, I thought.

"Well, yes, in a way," he drawled; "he's her husband."

"But—" I exclaimed, after a moment of bewilderment, "but——"

"Yes?" asked the barrister.

"Oh, well, I guess it's none of my business," I said.

"Quite so," the barrister agreed.



A MISUNDERSTOOD MAN

GERALDINE—Did you ever have the feeling that people didn't understand you?

GERALD—I often have it; I use the telephone a great deal.

AT NIGHT-TIME

WHEN they sail the barge of night-time
 From the pine-clad shadow land,
 There's an aching in the hill's breast
 Only hill-hearts understand.

There's a crying in the marshes,
 Like a throbbing 'cello string,
 When the Southwind tells the elm tree
 Of his young sweetheart—the Spring.

Vagrant wings beat joy-tipped skyward
 O'er a day of sun-stained green,
 But the homing note is sadness
 In the Summer twilight's sheen.

Lovers dance to Love's gay piping
 In the morning's ruddy fire;
 Lovers faint for love's night-coming
 In the Garden of Desire.

EMERY POTTLE.



IGNORANCE

DE STYLE—Have you ever heard of ping-pong?
 GUNBUSTA (*innocently*)—Oh, yes; I frequently take my laundry to him.



SOME men never realize how securely hidden a woman's pocket is till they
 marry a rich widow.



CHROMATOPSIA

YOUTH saw things rosy, bright and fair,
 For then the world was new to us;
 Now that the goggles of Age we wear,
 All things look rather blue to us.



A PERSON of unquestioned social position—the tramp.

THE REBELLION OF MAY

By Edgar Fawcett

"I'M glad Archie has come," said Mrs. Downinfield to her daughter, May. "He's so comfortable, somehow. Wasn't he nice this afternoon?"

"Archie's always nice," said May, vaguely. "He accommodates himself."

"You've just hit it, my dear," heartily agreed the girl's mother. "He accommodates himself! Not specially to you or me, or the man in the street, but to life, passing events, circumstance, whatever one may call it. Here he is, in London, magnificently convenient for us both. He comes into our new South Audley-street house, and looks about and smiles sweetly, and pretends not to notice those hideous yellow-red curtains that shall go down to-morrow, but has a kind word for the Sheraton chairs and the Louis Quinze cabinet. He is dressed as well as the Duke of Winterwater——"

"Oh, that Duke of Winterwater!" broke in May, screening a yawn with one hand while she pushed back her springy, curly auburn locks with the other, from a face all bloom and charm. "It seems as if you were always having him in your mind."

"He is dressed, I said, as well as the Duke of Winterwater," pursued her mother, inflexibly and rather unamiably, "and his Boston accent, like our own, doesn't contain the hint of a 'burr,' however un-Londonish. He has half the big Downinfield fortune, of which you and I share the other half. With his slimness, and his blondness, and his expressive eyes, and his copious income, he might easily marry some girl of title here."

"Oh, but girls of title don't marry that way."

"When there's a great deal of money they might. Have you forgotten young Lexington, who so recently married the Marquis of Marlowe's daughter? True, he was a Bostonian besides being the son of almost a billionaire. They somehow draw such a line, I've noticed, with us Bostonians! It's quite remarkable how they separate us from dwellers in the other great Eastern towns. Besides, my dear May, young Lexington's marriage will, I think, set an example. In two or three years there may be a sort of retaliatory fashion. The American girl who hungers to become Lady This or That will co-exist with the American Cæsus who wishes to possess Lady This or That for his chosen spouse."

"What a dismal prophecy!" exclaimed May.

Her mother knew certain notes in the girl's voice. She stiffened a little at the ring of this reply. Tall, frail, pink and pretty, she flattered herself that she could float through a drawing-room with as much high-nosed, aerial elegance as any Englishwoman of rank whom she had yet seen.

"Why 'dismal'?" she now asked, somewhat pettishly. "The prospect, I should say, is rather picturesque."

"To me," retorted May, her face clouding as if with pain, "it's horrible! There's some excuse for our women who try to push themselves into the peerage. Women have no real career except that which marriage proffers them. Nowadays, in America, they can be almost anything—doctors, law-

yers, architects, professors—and yet nothing that so saves them from the covert sneer of mankind as to be the wives of distinguished aristocrats. I pity them for these loveless and cold-blooded unions—” her mother started, here, and smiled acidly—“yet I often feel that they’re more victimized than vicious. But the thought of our men turning tuft-hunters, of our splendid republic breeding such a sycophantic progeny—oh, no, no! I should pray against it if I were religious, and roundly curse it if I were profane!”

“My dear child!” And Mrs. Downinfield laughed the thin, keen laugh that only left her when she was nettled. “I hope you’ll be careful not to talk like that before anyone but myself and dear, indulgent Archie. If you do, people will simply stare and think you a bore. What you call tuft-hunting among our men would only be a new form of snobbery. Heaven knows, New York, Philadelphia and our own Boston are all teeming with snobbery in other forms. Some sort of change is inevitable. Fashion exists on it. So you pity women who marry English titles? Ah, you won’t pity yourself, May, when the proper *parti* asks for you! I know my sex. Besides, you blow hot and cold. You liked this London idea for June and July. Now, I observe that you’re *gênée* with our lovely home in South Audley street. Surely your presentation, the other day, was a success. The ambassador has been very kind to us. I’m worn out with the provincialisms of Newport, and wish to miss them for at least one year. Next Summer, perhaps, you may go there for a short stay, if you like, as the Duchess——”

“Of Winterwater?” finished May, rising. Her mother rose also, and the two stood facing each other. In firmer and more heated tones than she often used, May went on:

“Mamma, you’re inexorable; I never quite realized just how completely until a few weeks ago. You’ve an influence over me, but I confess to

you that it’s waning. As you’re well aware, I used to adore you. I love you still, but you press me hard—you press me far too hard! I read your determination now. You brought me here to sell me——”

“May!”

“Oh, yes; that’s the right word. I hate to tell you so, but I’ve had thoughts of running away from you. They have passed, now. I suppose it’s because of the old love, which still remains so powerful.”

“Where, may I ask,” said Mrs. Downinfield, icily, “did you propose to ‘run’?”

“Over sea. Back to Boston. Aunt Elizabeth would receive me, of course.”

“That old Beacon-street frump,” smiled her mother, “who dines at three o’clock in the afternoon, has supper at six, and thinks it a sin to be out of bed after ten? Delightful! But you didn’t run; of course not. You preferred to stay here and be admired, as you certainly were last night at the opera, and have handsome women stare at you through their lorgnettes and ask, ‘Who’s the damsel with the graceful shoulders and the dimpled chin?’ Oh, girls, girls! They’re all alike! I was once a girl myself!”

She had been a very ambitious girl, as it now remained rather dimly chronicled, and one whose obscure parentage caused all of patrician Boston to hold up horrified hands when Philip Downinfield made her his wife. But she had instantly assumed a high place, with the aid of his name and dollars. This was getting to be a long while ago, and, like so many social new-comers, she had aimed at leadership. Her husband had died when May was the merest child, and everybody had then said that she would certainly marry again. Somewhat later, however, this belief was altered. Folk remembered that she had always been cold to men, though in her train, even before widowhood, were not a few important followers. “No,” the new verdict now expressed itself, “she could not specially better herself by taking another husband. She has im-

mense wealth; she is magnificently free. It is her daughter whom she means to marry brilliantly—*voilà tout!*"

May felt that she had now seriously displeased her mother, and for a moment the old tyranny of parental influence evoked the old submission.

"Mamma," she said, advancing a few steps, "I——"

But just then a noiseless footman appeared, bearing a card on a salver.

"The Honorable Mrs. Devereux-Scrope," read May's mother. She added to the servant: "Show in the lady, please." Then to her daughter: "Will you remain, May?"

The girl waited until they were once more alone together. "No, mamma. I dislike that woman, and you know why. She takes pay for introducing foreigners to English people of note. You have already feed her, I am sure. It is most shocking." All May's desire to propitiate her mother had vanished. "I am going out. I have an appointment with Cousin Archie at the National Gallery." Her eyes glittered and her mouth grew tense as she continued: "Remember, please, that your negotiations with this lady are entirely your own, and that I have no possible concern with them."

At once May passed into the next room. "Rebellion, indeed!" mused Mrs. Downinfield. "Am I losing all control of the girl? No—no! She'll marry as I wish when the test comes, if only I can bring it about."

The next minute she was saying to Mrs. Devereux-Scrope, "I'm delighted to have you drop in so opportunely. Pray, shall I order tea, or do you think it too early?"

"Tea at four, in London, my dear Mrs. Downinfield!" was the answer. "What a huge gap it would leave in one's afternoon! I rarely dine until nine this delicious June weather, unless, of course, I am going to the play. That is what makes the opera so charming. One can drop in any time before its last act."

Mrs. Devereux-Scrope was probably fifty, but her face and figure, both

fragile, were so unrelentingly "made up," and so skilfully as well, that her exact age might have needed, in order definitely to place it, the combined sapience of a cutaneous physician and a shrewd anatomist. She was dressed in the fluffy, befurbelowed, large-hatted way that London women adopt in Summer. She had once been handsome, but all her former beauty had now dropped into pathetic background. You simply saw a slight-made woman, with hints of pristine charm underlying an immense output of artificiality. In early girlhood she had drifted, for some commercial reason, from Indiana to England, her parents being long dead. She had married the younger son of a peer, who turned out a rake and rascal. Her husband had died of his dissipations after one matrimonial decade, leaving her the wreck of a somewhat fat *dot* and a position that everybody accepted, partly because of pity, partly because of a beauty still distinctive. Now she was no longer beautiful, and always piercingly in need of money. But while society was necessary to her as meat and drink, she was also, in a way, necessary to society. More English than the English, supreme in tact, hard as glass and keen as a rapier, knowing everybody in her world, driving her native wit like a cautious whip, dowered with superb high spirits, reveling in scandals and discreetly telling some of the spiciest bad stories ever giggled over from Scarborough to Torquay, Amelia Devereux-Scrope still held her own among the best country houses and the most exclusive Mayfair drawing-rooms.

To-day she was acutely bored. The hire that for five or six seasons she had received galled her more and more as it grew more and more needful. She had never dreamed that she would have to come to it, but by degrees she had lowered herself, and now, beneath all her callousness beat the pulse of an unconquerable self-contempt. She felt bitter and brutal as she looked straight into her hostess's eyes and said:

"You've told me about your as-

pirations. Well, I've made further inquiries about Winterwater. He's thirty-seven—as Burke, De Brett & Co. have doubtless told you—and he's decidedly hard up—that is, for a duke. He has three separate places on his hands—Orr, in Devonshire; Dugdale Castle, in Norfolk, and—well, I forget the other; it's somewhere in Scotland. Frankly, now, if he marries your daughter what will she bring? Put it in dollars, if you choose."

Scanning the carpet for a moment, Mrs. Downinfield put it in dollars.

"That's big, surely. She's got all that in her own right?"

"In her own right."

"And what will she settle on *him*?"

Mrs. Downinfield started. Then, composing herself: "A million dollars."

"I don't think he'd take it," muttered Mrs. Devereux-Scrope, looking down at her gloves, which were always a trifle soiled except when she went to see duchesses and the wives of famed cabinet ministers. "I really don't think he'd take it. Could it not be made two?"

After a pause, Mrs. Downinfield murmured: "Well, perhaps."

"May I," persisted her interlocutress, "contrive to—er—render him—er—quite confident that it *would* be two?"

After a pause the response came: "Well, yes."

"Ah!" and the *entrepreneuse* drew in a deep, relieved breath. "Now, my dear Mrs. Downinfield, don't imagine for a second I will not bring him over at a million—or even less—if I can. But a definite area of action is so helpful." She touched her nostrils with a little silver vinaigrette. "There were other matters."

"Yes. It was very pleasant at Mrs. Pomfret's; but I have heard that she—er—is not one of the Pomfrets."

"A rather distant branch," admitted Mrs. Devereux-Scrope. "I didn't find it so *very* easy to get you the cards."

"Possibly not. I can well under-

stand that you didn't. But—er—" and Mrs. Downinfield gave to her voice a somnolent little decline, intentionally leaving the sentence unfinished.

Her visitor produced an exaggerated sigh. "You mean, of course, that the people were not of the smartest. Well, I admit that. All taken together, the gathering had certain detrimental tinges. Ah, somebody's been telling you this!"

"I grant it," said Mrs. Downinfield. "Can't you do better for me? You've almost entire *carte blanche*, you know. Lady Hilda Flint's garden-party, for instance?"

"I'll try; but Lady Hilda's dreadfully particular. She has to be. She's an earl's daughter, but she married one of those whiskey men for his money. Besides, she poses as a hater of Americans."

"All the better. I should like to be seen in her rooms for just that reason. And Mrs. Roy Abernethy?"

"I simply couldn't get you *there*—I simply could *not*!" Mrs. Devereux-Scrope became plaintive. "Oh, they *have* been babbling to you! And now you want the moon."

"I want the sun," said Mrs. Downinfield, impregably.

The other got out a fan from somewhere among her gossamer draperies, and began to use it with soft violence. It was small, and painted with exquisite Watteau-like figures. Her companion, with eyes trained to the perception of all such costliness, watched it and thought: "A 'consideration,' perhaps, from some struggler like myself. But of me she doesn't demand expensive baubles. Hard cash, rather, and plenty of it."

"There are places," affirmed Mrs. Devereux-Scrope, with dreary frankness, "to which I can only point the way."

"What way?"

"In your case—well, I'll put it bluntly: you've met a royalty."

"You mean the Prince Louis of Saltravia?"

"Yes. He sat next to your daugh-

ter, you told me, at that Anglo-American dinner, as one might call it, given by the California woman. He was nice to her, and talked to her constantly."

"He a real royalty! How can you call him one? I believed he was merely a German dignitary."

"So, from one viewpoint, he is," Mrs. Devereux-Scrope assented. "He hasn't any equeries, and his wife, whom he married morganatically in Germany, is never seen anywhere. But though his birth and title are Teutonic, he is nevertheless a royalty. Still, he's far more approachable than most. I know him; I detest him, but I tolerate his cumbersome Anglo-German compliments and listen to the platitudes he calls wit. Heaven help me if I dared to snub him! Heaven help anybody, for that matter, who wishes to retain the slightest social foothold! He will drop into my little Sloane-street house, as it happens, next Thursday. He is—er—rather interested in a girl whom I know, and whom he admires."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Downinfield, quickly; "then he's not a good husband to his morganatic wife."

"I'm afraid he's a very bad one." The eyes of the two ladies met. "He only likes young, unmarried girls," Mrs. Devereux-Scrope continued, with significant slowness.

"Mercy!" cried Mrs. Downinfield. "Do you mean that he makes love to them?"

"Don't ask me. I've only this to say about him: He's a perfect fool, and, like many fools, he's a terrible sentimentalist. If you care to be at my house next Thursday, you will find him there. He is powerful, as I told you. In two weeks he could make your May the fashion."

Here Mrs. Devereux-Scrope sheathed her little fan, and rose. "Think it over. One thing is comfortable about Prince Louis. He comes to your house as an ordinary person. He doesn't allow any fuss about rising when he enters, and all that. But, I repeat, my dear lady, that he has the magic 'open

sesame.' Nobody dares to offend him. If he appeared in your opera box some evening you would soon understand."

Two bright spots were burning on Mrs. Downinfield's cheeks as she followed her guest to the outer door. "No, no, *no!*" she was averring, in firmest undertone; "May would never endure from him the faintest familiarity, and I should never forgive her if she did."

"Quite so. Good-bye. Had such a pleasant chat with you! And thank you so much for the—kind remittance of yesterday. Of course, you'll do just as you think best. If, now, your May were clever at parrying the tactics of such stupid old idiots—of *playing* them, don't you know?—all could be made to go smoothly enough. You'd both get your innings in the end, and no bones broken. Don't you see? But never mind. I shall most probably see Winterwater at Lady Helvellyn's ball to-morrow evening. How sweet of you to come out into the hall with me! What a nice old clock you've got in yonder corner! Everything in your house, by the way, is immensely good; you haven't made a single mistake. But *think* of the time! and I faithfully promised Mrs. Dudley Cranbourne that I'd be in Portman Square to pour tea with her at precisely a quarter to five. Good-bye."

It was almost six, that afternoon, when May returned home with her cousin Archie. Mrs. Downinfield had been ired by her daughter's imperious and challenging course, but she had also been somewhat alarmed by it. All said, she felt the policy of self-restraint to be her wisest plan. She was a woman who could draw deep from large funds of that possession, though to temporize and conciliate in the case of one who had been so long her loving vassal seemed shot through, at this stage of their relations, with an abhorrent novelty.

"My dear boy," she now said to Archie, "I wish you would instruct your valet to bring an evening coat and its concomitants here to South Audley street."

"Why?" asked Archie.

"Oh, because you're so good and kind as to let May and myself command you at a moment's notice. Now, as it happens, we've nothing to-night, and I should so like to dine at the Bristol. Eight is about the right hour. I'm sure you could manage to have us there by then."

"You forget," said Archie, in his light, smooth, neutral way, "that I'm staying at the Bristol."

"Oh, so you are! Then you'll meet us in the *entre-sol*, won't you, at—say eight?"

Archie came toward them, an hour later, as they emerged from their cab. "We're in luck," he said. "All the tables but one were taken, and that, in the nick of time, I secured."

The usual ten-shilling *table-d'hôte* dinner was served. A few addenda were bespoken, among them a champagne of choicest vintage. The room was extremely dim, but every board was flooded with light from pink-shaded candles. A delicious air of comfort prevailed, and of seclusion as well, notwithstanding the large assemblage.

Placid voices were heard everywhere, the voices that one always hears in all English restaurants except those of the lowest class. At her own table Mrs. Downinfield regretted the frequent lapses of silence. Obviously May meant a continued hostility. As for Archie, he was never conversationally salient. One felt his presence, as a rule, through affable smiles and amiable nods. Since her return from the National Gallery May had chosen to mantle herself in reticence. Even during their drive to Cork street, while they sat together in the cab, she had hardly volunteered a single characteristic sentence. "Oh," her mother had fiercely thought, while their vehicle went rattling through Bond street, "if May's father had only left me a life interest in *all* the money, and so made it futile for her to play the autocrat!"

Presently a voice reached them from a table close at hand. It was a male

voice, and it spoke in English, but with a strong German accent.

"Yes, these dinners are always most charming—always. Here there is a cosiness, a hint of seclusion and comfort, that combine themselves with the best cooking."

Archie and May both heard the voice. May's back happened to be turned toward the speaker.

"This gentleman," said Archie, in low tones, to Mrs. Downinfield, "makes you wonder if he mightn't be employed here as a kind of polite advertising agent."

The answer was almost whispered. "No, no; don't dream it. He's Prince Louis of Saltravia."

"I'm as wise as I was before," carelessly smiled Archie.

But at once May struck in: "Prince Louis? Dining here?"

"Why not?" said her mother. "He dines where he pleases. He's a royalty, with happy freedom from all ceremonial worries. It is a *partie carrée*, by-the-bye. There are two ladies and two gentlemen. The man is the Duke of Winterwater. The ladies I don't know, but they're both extremely smart-looking."

"Perhaps one of them," said May, with veiled irony, "is his morganatic wife."

"That lady never appears anywhere," returned Mrs. Downinfield. She looked steadily at May for a moment. "He has immense social power. If he came and spoke to us it would place us just where we wish to be."

"I don't wish to be anywhere," laughed May, coldly. She cast a glance at Archie, who did not return it, but ate his *sole au vin blanc* with an inscrutable repose. "What a gentleman he is!" Mrs. Downinfield silently affirmed. "Even if he sympathizes with this new spirit of revolt in May—which he most probably doesn't—he will not show before me one discourteous sign."

Aloud she said to her daughter: "There's that vacant seat, May, just opposite you. Please take it. Shiver a little, you know, as if you felt a

draught, and then go over. Neither the prince nor the duke can see you where you are sitting; your back is turned to them both."

May instantly gave her head a negative shake. As she did so a steely flash left her soft eyes. "You amaze me, mamma, by such a request."

Her mother suppressed a moan. But soon her features lighted; the Duke of Winterwater caught her eye, and bowed. The prince bowed with cordial vehemence, and she flutteredly rose a few inches from her chair, in acknowledgment of his salute.

"May," she said, in an agitated undertone, "Prince Louis is staring at your back."

"I wonder if he recognizes it, mamma. There's no particular reason why he should; we've only met once."

"They're having dessert," continued Mrs. Downinfield. "Perhaps Prince Louis may allow the duke to come over for a little chat. If he does——"

But Prince Louis himself, as it occurred, came over and seated himself in the vacant chair. Mrs. Downinfield tingled in every nerve with triumph. She knew that the entire roomful was gazing at her small table, and that many of these observers belonged among the smartest London cliques, and that the visage of their new companion was known to all of them.

He had a few perfectly commonplace things to say. He was going to some theatre with his friend, Winterwater, and the two ladies, whose names he mentioned—they were names of a most distinguished ring—and he had only a few minutes to spare. Were Mrs. Downinfield and her daughter to be at the opera to-morrow evening? Yes? Then it would give him the deepest pleasure to join them in their box. Meanwhile, before rising, the prince had directed upon May several of his blandest smiles.

"His serene highness—I believe that is what the *Morning Post* calls him—is decidedly struck with you, May," said Mrs. Downinfield. Her sparkling eyes watched the party of four disappear.

"So the Duke of Winterwater didn't come to us," she went on. "Perhaps it wasn't good form, as the prince had preceded him."

May laughed faintly. "It's a tie between the two gentlemen as regards general dullness, mamma. Of course, the duke is younger; but I haven't found him any less tedious. He's just as much too thin and lank as the prince is too stout. One face is fat and animal; the other is lean and imbecile. A glance at one, repels; a glance at the other, bores."

Mrs. Downinfield, made invincibly good-humored by the recent event, appealed with mock entreaty to Archie.

"Dear boy, your cousin is becoming penetrated with Anglophobia. I do so wish you would try to talk her out of it. Won't you?"

Archie surveyed for a moment May's bright, sensitive face. "I'm afraid, Aunt Winifred, that she'll cling to her own way of thinking, spite of all dissuasion."

During the rest of their stay at the Bristol, the Downinfield trio were almost as much observed as the prince's party had been. Outside in the hall, while May and her mother were waiting for a hansom and Archie was helping them with their wraps, a florid little woman drew near and said, most genially:

"I'm so very pleased to learn that you are stopping here in town for the season. I saw you at the opera on Monday evening, but——"

But here Mrs. Downinfield drawled, with a glacial air: "You saw us, Mrs. Beverby, but you cut us. Come, May. Archie, are you ready?"

"Perhaps I was a little imprudent," said Mrs. Downinfield to May, in the cab. "But, of course, you know what that Beverby woman was in Boston. She came to London in despair, and I've just heard that she's as snobbish a 'climber' here as she was in the Back Bay. The absurd card she now plays is to avoid Americans and openly sneer at them. But the prince to-night was too much for her."

"I suppose so," said May, listlessly.

"You recollect, of course, how she pushed her way to one of our balls by the aid of the Franklin Winthrops."

"Yes—I believe I do recollect, mamma."

"What a wonderful piece of luck it is," pursued Mrs. Downinfield, "that we should have secured the good-will of Prince Louis! Really, May, if he passes five minutes in our box to-morrow evening we are socially *lancées*!"

The prince passed not only five minutes there, as it happened, but certainly twenty. Afterward, in the phrase of Mrs. Downinfield, it all became "plain sailing." For a long while, indeed, she was obliged, with Mrs. Devereux-Scrope's assistance, to weed her new crop of invitations. Twice, during that time, May and her mother drove out in Hyde Park on the semi-royal coach. The Duke of Winterwater sat next to May on the second of these august occasions. Archie was also honored with an invitation, but he occupied one of the rear seats, next a lovely young English girl, daughter of a penniless clergyman, whose birth was exceedingly good. But Archie, though always the paragon of politeness, did not deport himself by any means like an enamoured swain.

That evening a great lady held a great dinner, and May went there with her mother. Prince Louis sat on her left, the Duke of Winterwater on her right. She was bored to death, when something suddenly roused her. The prince had been drinking; he had evidently come to the dinner in a semi-intoxicated state. For a while May was somberly amused. Everybody knew that his serene highness was occasionally given to these vinous moods, but as one of his most loyal hostesses had remarked: "He doesn't do it very often, and he always manages his legs perfectly." The chief trouble, however, on such occasions, was his inability to manage his tongue. Not that it grew thick, but that it sometimes grew imprudent. There had been

an agreement for several days past between May and himself that he should take her for what he called "quite an informal little drive," on the morrow. Society looked upon an invitation to bowl with Prince Louis in his dumpy, yellow-wheeled dogcart through the Park as an honor of supreme import. The prince now referred to this engagement. "I am sometimes nervous in that great crush, sir," she said.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you're not going to disappoint me, I hope?"

"Disappoint you, sir? What made you fancy that I could be so uncivil?"

He laughed with a tell-tale sonority. "It's gettin' about," he said, oddly combining an elision of final "g's" with his pronounced German accent, "that you're a young lady with a very strong will of your own—very strong indeed."

"Report, sir, was never falser," denied May. "I'm naturally quite yielding, except when I feel myself imposed upon."

"Would you think that I was imposin' upon you," asked the prince, "if I should ask you, some day, for one or two sweet little kisses from that most lovely pair o' lips?"

May kept her eyes on the wine-flushed face for a moment, then withdrew them and turned to the duke, at her other side. She did not know that her own face had grown ashen and that into her look had crept the dullness of disgust. She had no recollection of what she said to the duke or of what he answered. But it soon grew very plain to her that Prince Louis was calling her name, and later she caught from him one or two fragments of speech. But to these she paid no heed, gazing steadily at the duke. A few people noticed the openness of her rebuff, and among them was her mother, on the opposite side of the table.

"Prince Louis is speaking to you," at length said the duke to May, in his blunt, childish manner.

"But I'm not speaking to *him*," the

girl replied. "It is my intention never to speak to him again."

"Good heavens! What has he said?"

"He has insulted me."

The duke creased his narrow and receding forehead. "Was it anything dreadful?"

"I don't know what *you* would call it. You've heard what *I* call it."

"But he's a little—er—" hesitated the duke.

"A little intoxicated? I grant it; so much the worse."

Just then the whole company rose, and it was thenceforth drawing-rooms for the ladies and smoking-room for the men.

"I wish to go directly home," said May, meeting her mother.

"What has happened?" muttered Mrs. Downinfield. "I saw you snub the prince. Others saw it as well."

"I don't care who saw it. I am going directly home. I will have a hansom called and go alone if you don't choose to accompany me."

"Of course I shall have to," groaned her mother. "But what excuse—?"

"I shall say that I'm ill," returned May. "That's all, mamma. I'm inflexible. If that man should come in here and try to speak to me again—well, I should hardly trust myself; that's all."

Home they went, with considerable promptness; and when, in the cab, Mrs. Downinfield heard the full reason of May's indignation, it is only doing her justice to state that she shared her daughter's resentment.

The next morning Archie appeared, shortly after his two kinswomen had finished breakfast. May had now slept off her sense of injury. She treated the whole recent affair with laughterful yet satiric scorn. She told Archie about her experience as though she were recounting some specially comic exploit of a hippopotamus in his tank at the "Zoo."

Archie, always demure as he was genial, nodded and smiled. "Now that you're not going to drive in the

royal tilbury, jagger-wagon, or whatever his unserene highness calls it," he said mildly, to May, "suppose we start for a good long pull on the river?"

"Delighted!" exclaimed May. "It will be like getting the bad taste out of one's mouth, to breathe lots of fresh air this lovely day. I'll be ready in a trice."

Scarcely had the cousins departed when Mrs. Devereux-Scrope arrived. She had been a guest at the dinner last evening, but had known nothing of May's discomfort until after the girl had left.

"Pray, what was the general verdict?" Mrs. Downinfield inquired.

"Oh, that your daughter was very much to blame."

"And the prince?"

"Is enraged beyond words at May. Her treatment quite sobered him. He came into the drawing-rooms after learning that she had gone, and was immediately surrounded by a sympathizing group of women. It's all horribly unfortunate," continued Mrs. Devereux-Scrope. "If you should go down into Scotland for the rest of the season it might all blow over. However, there's no earthly use in trying to fight the prince." The speaker dropped her glance to the floor, then suddenly uplifted it. "Still, you might return from Scotland with your May engaged to Winterwater. That would prove a splendid *coup*."

Then Mrs. Downinfield brightened. "You've talked with him?"

"Last night."

"An unpropitious time, surely!"

"You forget, dear Mrs. Downinfield, I had most propitiating things to say."

"Ah, yes. And he—accepted—what?"

"Miss May's hand, with the two millions." Mrs. Devereux-Scrope put her head on one side, and looked down at her chronically soiled gloves. "I did the very best I could, but he insisted on four hundred thousand pounds—two millions of dollars."

"It's all useless," deplored Mrs.

Downinfield. Tears were rare with her, but they now flooded her eyes. "May will not marry him. She seems to have changed utterly since I brought her here among these people." And then the distressed lady spoke on and on, till Mrs. Devereux-Scrope rather grimly rose.

"Oh," said the latter, "I'm sorry." Her voice grew tart and frosty. "Really, I feel quite in a hole. Winterwater is coming to you at six this evening. I hope you'll see him, and settle with him yourself. Recollect, I spoke authoritatively in your name. I haven't a doubt that he'll expect the clearest understanding to be arrived at between yourself and him. Good morning! I'm sorry your girl has become so strong-minded and self-assertive. All this matter with the duke has been a very great trouble. And now—*ça m'agace!* Another remittance—just what you thought proper—would be—but never mind!" Here the little fan was unsheathed, and the "made-up" face briskly fanned with it. "I leave all that quite, *quite* to yourself. Good morning!"

Alone, Mrs. Downinfield paced the floor, and thought of her London future. There was no use in appealing to Archie. He would be patient, complaisant, and finally tell her that he hadn't the slightest influence over May when she had once taken a firm resolve. "I used to have influence," the girl's mother now forlornly thought; "but when we came here, when this passion for English distinction got hold of me, everything changed. Now she despises me and my aims—and to what a miserable pass has her contempt brought us both! Both, did I say? Ah, no; *she* will not mind, with that panoply of American patriotism, so like her dead father's! It is only I who must suffer!"

Just as Mrs. Downinfield had determined that she would go out for a walk before luncheon in the exquisite weather, and so, perhaps, gain something like the shadow of an appetite,

Mrs. Devereux-Scrope was again announced.

"You are *sure*, dear Mrs. Downinfield, that we are not being listened to?"

"Why, yes;" and her companion glided to the one door of the apartment, opening it suddenly. "Were you afraid of some servant?" she asked, returning.

"Yes. Oh, these cat-footed English servants! I know them so well! Do I look excited? I feel terribly so. I have made a discovery. Your May has been doing a horribly rash thing. I chanced to pass through St. James's street this morning."

"Well?"

"Jermyn street, you know, runs from St. James's street to the Haymarket. I suddenly remembered a shop where I wanted to make a purchase, and turned into St. James's street. Hardly had I gone five hundred yards when I saw May and your nephew, Mr. Archie, standing at a door on the opposite side of the road. It was, most evidently, the door of lodgings. Your daughter was laughing, and for a slight while she seemed unwilling to enter. Archie put one hand persuasively on her shoulder. With the other hand he thrust a latch-key into the door. Then they disappeared."

"Well," slowly answered Mrs. Downinfield, "and if they did? Those are Archie's new apartments in Jermyn street; he's told us all about them. He didn't like his quarters at the Bristol, and determined to make a change. Deceitful young pair! So they didn't go on the river, after all! Still, perhaps May only dropped in with him to look about before they took the train for Richmond, Windsor or whatever was their destination."

Out came Mrs. Devereux-Scrope's little fan. "How quietly you take it!"

"Quietly?"

"They were there an hour and a quarter. I watched them all the time. No doubt I attracted attention. I saw two policemen look at me *most* suspiciously. Don't you realize that this

sort of thing is horribly compromising?"

"Compromising?"

Mrs. Downinfield burst into the merriest laugh she had given since her artificial London life began. "Why, they're first cousins, May and Archie!" she went on. "They're exactly like brother and sister. They played together as little children. All through their lives they have been constantly in each other's company. What do you mean, Mrs. Scrope?" These last words were tinged with a sudden hauteur.

The little fan oscillated with great impetus. "Oh, I mean that you now have your May in the hollow of your hand! Cousins, here, can't safely behave like this. Cousins, here, very often marry. It may all have been the most innocent proceeding, but if it got abroad, I can assure you that tongues would wag."

That sentence, "You now have your May in the hollow of your hand," kept ringing for hours in Mrs. Downinfield's brain.

At about half-past five May returned. She looked a trifle over-heated, for the sun was warm, despite those delicious breezes which haunt nearly every English Summer day.

"Where is Archie?" asked her mother.

"He left me to make some sort of purchase in Bond street," she answered, while drawing off her gloves. "He's coming back here directly." She looked, with a nervous, abrupt fixity, straight into her parent's eyes. "He has something to tell you."

"Did you go on the river?" Mrs. Downinfield asked.

"Yes."

"You're home early. The twilights are long now, you had no engagement that I know of for this evening; I thought you would stay later."

"We went only to Kew, and paddled about there for a certain time. We were late when we got to Kew, and a long row would have kept us until after dark. The truth is, we began the day all wrong. After I left home Archie conceived the idea of my going with

him to his new chambers in Jermyn street. I preferred the river, but let him have his way. We must have stayed there an age, talking about a wall-paper which I thought hideous and a set of furniture which I liked and he detested. Then Archie proposed luncheon at the Prince's restaurant; and so anything like a *real* day on the river was spoiled. That's all."

Mrs. Downinfield shook her head, with half-closed eyes. "It isn't all, May. I'm glad you've been frank with me. I feared—but never mind. You were seen entering Archie's chambers; you were also seen leaving them, after you'd spent an hour and a quarter there."

May slowly nodded, while her blue eyes flashed. "Oh, yes; I was seen and watched by that abominable woman who is in your pay. She thought we didn't notice her; she thought I didn't keep an eye on her through the curtains while she played sentinel. And afterward she brought this appalling piece of news to you. The wretch! She has spoiled my entire day—spoiled it, I mean, by the realization that there can be people in the world so venomous. This is what you get, mamma, by soiling yourself with such creatures!"

Mrs. Downinfield glanced at the clock on the mantel. "You have been playing with fire, May. I don't really blame you—of course I can't. But in a foreign town like this, you have done a most foolish thing. Mrs. Devereux-Scrope will, of course, gossip, unless I—I—prevent it. She has arranged with Winterwater that you shall become engaged to him. He will be here at six."

May turned pale, but only from wrath. "He will come to accept your bribe. What have I been knocked down at, mamma? One million or two?" Her next words, low spoken, were like two separate dirks, tipped, each, with toxic sarcasm. "And this is Mrs. Downinfield, a woman who held her head high among the honorable and respected leaders of Boston society! What answer could you make if some-

one went to your native city and told of how you had brought your daughter here and connived with a painted hanger-on at the patrician London houses to sell her for a ducal title? Worse than that, of how you had threatened your daughter with the consequences of a smirched reputation, if she did not——"

"May! The duke's voice!"

It was, indeed, the voice of Winterwater, and it said outside to the butler, in its rather effeminate and tenuous treble: "I'll go right in, thank you, for I know that Mrs. Downinfield is expecting me."

Very soon after that the duke entered.

He started a little on seeing May. He gave his hand to Mrs. Downinfield, and then extended it toward the younger lady.

The younger lady did not take it. "Duke," she said, in place of other salutation, "how much money did my mother promise to pay you, through Mrs. Devereux-Scrope, if you would ask me to become the Duchess of Winterwater?"

The duke put a yellow-gloved hand to his slant, sallow brow. "What a girl you are!" he muttered, miserably.

"I'm an American girl," smiled May, stonily.

"She knows nothing—nothing," panted Mrs. Downinfield. "She only invents, imagines."

"Ah," cried the duke, "she's divined it all!"

He had drawn backward from May, but he now reapproached her. She still smiled at him, with her calm, winsome, defiant face. He was a very ordinary person, in spite of his extraordinary position. And then there

came to him, as sometimes will come to the most ordinary person, a psychological moment.

"I—I don't ask one penny of a dower! I—I only ask you! Will you be my wife, Miss Downinfield?"

"She couldn't be your wife, duke," said Archie, entering just at this point, and with the air of one who has overheard rather than listened, "for she isn't Miss Downinfield at all, but Mrs. Archibald Downinfield. We were married a fortnight ago."

Winterwater stared, lifted both hands, gave a kind of elfin cackle of laughter—which may have been the ludicrous exponent of some really tragic heart-pang—and slipped through the open doorway.

May's mother sprang toward Archie. "You traitor!"

"Don't insult Archie," said May. "I should certainly have gone back to Boston if he hadn't proposed. And when he did propose, and talked about how he could arrange for our wedding in a little quiet suburban place, I discovered that I'd never liked any man half so much as I liked him, and that the stars in their courses had always meant us to be man and wife."

Haggard and almost reeling, her mother, with both hands clenched, sank into an arm-chair. "Go from me—go, both of you," she enjoined. "I never wish to look on either of you again, and I will never forgive you—never!"

Then Archie spoke, very softly, yet with intense force. "We shall not go *from* you, Aunt Winifred; we shall go back *with* you, we hope, to America. And, as for pardon, we will try to make you realize, sooner or later, that it is not your office to forgive—it is *May's!*"



HALF AND HALF

"**I**S your house a Queen Anne?"
"In front—Mary Ann at the back!"

UN SALON LITTÉRAIRE

Par J. d'Yvroie

QUAND vers 1892, il y a une dizaine d'années, je vins pour la première fois à Chicago j'y fus admirablement reçu. J'y apportais la réputation d'un Français, oiseau rare, qui s'était promené sous toutes les latitudes! La célèbre Madame Julia Greene ne pouvait manquer cette occasion d'affirmer à nouveau sa réputation de cornac attitré de toutes les célébrités plus ou moins douteuses, jeunes ou vieilles, surtout jeunes. Sur la foi de relations de voyage publiées dans je ne sais plus quelle revue éphémère, à peine lue en France, mais très goûtée à Chicago, Madame Greene avait désiré me connaître. Elle m'accueillit comme si j'avais fait partie de la mission Stanley; elle avait lu tous mes livres parus, ce qui ne manqua pas de m'interloquer, mes livres étant encore à paraître, et possédait à fond ma psychologie: *J'étais de la race des voyageurs, j'avais une âme de goéland*. Je reconnaissais le mot pour l'avoir vu dans Pierre Loti, auquel elle me compara.

À ces prétentions près, c'était une aimable femme, bien moins ridicule que son entourage et supérieure à sa réputation. Elle avait énormément lu nos ouvrages français et lisait beaucoup encore, mais elle avait mal retenu; une grande confusion régnait dans ses souvenirs: elle citait au hasard les maximes de penseurs et les passages de poètes qui avaient le plus frappé son imagination, et ce hasard n'était pas un grand maître. Elle s'efforçait surtout à laisser d'elle une impression de culture intellectuelle et philosophique, et travaillait par

tous les moyens à prolonger au delà de la mort sa figure de Mécène féminin.

Au bout de quelques jours d'intimité elle decida de me produire, et un beau soir le tout Chicago de l'intelligence se trouva chez elle pour faire ma connaissance. À mon entrée dans les salons je me sentis envahi du vague malaise que ressentent les nerveux au milieu des squelettes des museums et des baleines desséchées des musées de marine: c'était bien un intérieur de fossiles. Si la maîtresse de céans y détonnait par son charme de blonde élégante restée grasse, les invités étaient inénarrables.

Le cénacle de Madame Greene! Cela dépassait toute hypothèse. Quelle ménagerie et quelle jeu de massacre! C'étaient des vieilles dames ennauagées de marabouts ou casquées d'aigrettes, qui avaient dû ravager les cœurs vers 1830. Celles qui étaient décolletées, l'étaient outrageusement, et dans des robes de tulle mauves ou vert d'eau, elles étalaient imperturbablement des ostéologies de cimetière ou des gorges en cascade; toutes avaient eu dans leur vie un grand homme. L'une avait approché Dickens, l'autre avait inspiré un sonnet à Lowell, la troisième était l'héroïne de tel livre; toutes connaissaient à fond notre littérature symbolique et décadente. C'était un aréopage de vieilles folles comme on n'en voit que dans les villes mortes et dénuées de toutes distractions, une réunion de vieilles Parques affligées de manies si invraisemblables que, si on les écrivait, on ne vous croirait pas.

Ainsi pour n'en citer que quelques-

unes, Madame O'Donnell, la veuve du ministre plénipotentiaire bien connu, pianiste accomplie et fervente de tous les maîtres de la musique, collectionnait éperdument tous les boutons de culotte, ceux des musiciens célèbres, entendons-nous. Elle en possédait de Liszt, de Wagner, de Gounod, de Verdi, de Massenet même, mais n'en avait pu obtenir de Camille Saint-Saëns; elle les faisait monter entourés de diamants et les voulait de bretelle gauche parce que plus près du cœur: avec cela la plus honnête femme. Une autre, Madame White, qui avait été à Paris une intime de la Duchesse de Pomar, vivait familièrement avec les personnages les plus marquants de l'histoire, les morts étaient à ses ordres. Tous les soirs elle se retirait discrètement à dix heures pour aller converser avec Louis XV.; c'était son flirt de la saison. Lauzun lui dictait ses Mémoires, Casanova voulait lui faire compléter quelques chapitres des siens. Madame White ne fréquentait que le dix-huitième siècle, mais Madame de Pompadour lui causait bien des ennuis avec sa jalousie du Roy.

Le moyen que la tête ne vous tournât pas au milieu de toutes ces démenches!

La veuve d'un colonel mort pendant la guerre de Sécession, Madame L. Brown, consolait aussi son veuvage en cultivant les Muses. C'était une âme pastorale. Rien n'était plus fade que les petites pièces de vers dont elle encombraient les journaux du crû sous le patronage de Madame Greene, les bergères, les bouquets de fougères et les nymphes bocagères en faisaient tous les frais; c'était une poésie de trumeau de province, du Benserade à l'usage des pensionnaires. Mais dans ce petit lait bouillait une nature ardente. Madame Brown se passionnait avec une déplorable facilité pour toutes les célébrités modernes. Elle ne pouvait voir un homme connu en chair ou en effigie sans se sentir pour lui capable de tous les dévouements; elle découpait dans les magazines les images de

ses préférences, leur faisait des cadres d'herbes sèches, d'algues vertes et de fausses perles, et à un moment donné, n'y pouvant plus tenir, envoyait l'objet à l'élu de son cœur.

On répondait rarement à ses épîtres brûlantes, surtout quand l'inflammable veuve joignait à l'envoi sa photographie. Mais la plus célèbre de ses mésaventures fut sa visite au poète Algernon Johnson, lors de son séjour à Chicago en 1889.

Le lauréat anglais était descendu à l'Hôtel Palmer, et ne voyait personne. Absorbé par les soins de sa personne et de son fameux poème, "Adonis et Venus," il déclinait toutes les invitations, éludait toutes les avances. Madame Brown, elle aussi avait écrit. Sans réponse du maître, elle prit sur elle de forcer sa porte et se présentait un matin à l'hôtel. Algernon Johnson attendait, ce matin-là, la pédicure, et avait donné ordre de laisser monter. Le valet de chambre, sur la foi de son physique, prend Madame Brown pour la personne attendue et l'introduit. Algernon Johnson était couché; il voit cette dame en noir, un petit sac à la main: "Aoh! c'est vous? C'est bien, commencez." Et soulevant la couverture, il lui tend son pied.

La Muse demeure interdite, et puis, devant cette nudité, croyant à quelque usage de la vieille Angleterre, hésite un peu et se précipite sur ce pied; elle le pétrit entre ses mains et le couvre de baisers. Stupeur épouvantée du poète: "What are you doing? Where is the maid? Chassez cette lady improper!" Et Johnson appelle, sonne et se débat exaspéré.

Confusion de Madame Brown. On s'explique. "Vous n'êtes donc pas la pédicure?"

"La pédicure?" Et Madame Brown suffoque. La pédicure! une habituée des salons de Madame Greene, la veuve d'un colonel! La pauvre femme se retira indignée. Quant au poète anglais, le même soir il quittait l'hôtel.

Et les amies de Madame Greene étaient à l'avenant. Le côté des hommes

était moins stupéfiant. C'était le groupe ordinaire des plus ordinaires poètes de petite ville: le vieux professeur qui tourne des quatrains aux dames et se lève au dessert pour porter des toasts, une main sur son cœur; l'ancien juge qui traduit Horace dans ses moments perdus; l'avocat retiré des affaires, dont le médailler, connu des hommes seuls, recèle des curieuses intailles de Pompéi et qui anacréontise aimablement au fumoir. Il y avait là aussi le vieux comédien recuit aux feux de toutes les rampes, et qui résume en lui Booth, Irving et Mansfield; il y avait enfin les inévitables esthètes anglais; les délicieux, les pâles et languissants admirateurs de Kipling et des auteurs tragiques d'avant Shakespeare, chastes amants de la lune et disciples de Johnson, et, comme lui, n'offrant que le bout des doigts aux dames; et puis, quelques messieurs sans importance.

La grande préoccupation de tous ces êtres atteints de dilettantisme aigu et de vanité chronique était les soirées littéraires et poétiques de Madame Greene. Tous rimaitaient en son honneur, tous ambitionnaient celui d'entendre leur poésies déclamées à haute voix, devant tout Chicago assemblé, aux mémorables *five o'clock teas* où l'on applaudissait leurs élucubrations.

L'auteur lisait quelquefois son œuvre. Le plus souvent l'un de ces professionnels *readers*, si connus en Amérique, était chargé de mettre en valeur les beautés de la composition. Le soir de la réception donnée en mon honneur était consacré à l'audition d'œuvres en Français, et ce fut la belle Miss Amalia Doris qui les déclama.

Miss Doris brûlait de monter sur les planches. Elle avait étudié l'élocution à Londres avec Terry et Irving; et à Paris, où elle avait fait un long séjour, elle avait eu des leçons de Bartet et de Coquelin, et sa prononciation française n'était réellement pas mauvaise.

On faisait grand cas dans tout l'état du talent de Miss Doris; les magazines et les journaux l'encensaient, et toute la région escomptait son avenir. Sarah

Bernhardt n'avait qu'à bien se tenir! Miss Doris était une belle personne, l'allure un peu de Jane Hading, vibrante comme l'arc d'Eros et d'un beau roux ardent; elle avait des dons merveilleux, une voix de métal, de longs yeux de caresse et une plastique qui n'égalait que son aplomb; Miss Amalia avait le secret des regards appuyés et des savantes attitudes. Ses amis lui trouvaient du génie, et Miss Doris ne demandait qu'à croire ses amis. . . . Mais tous ces ridicules, on les lui pardonnait à cause de sa touchante affection pour sa mère; la jeune tragédienne désarmait les rieurs par son culte filial; elle traînait partout avec elle, dans le monde comme au théâtre, Madame Doris mère, une bonne grosse femme réjouie avec l'accent de la campagne dans toute sa personne, et dans ses cheveux des relents de *baked beans*; une exquise et brave femme de mère, intraitable sur la question de l'honneur, vrai dragon de vertu, mais qui s'alanguissait, amollie d'émotion, à la voix de son enfant, la buvait du regard, les mains jointes, en extase, et se rengorgeait dans son orgueil en disant: "Ma jeune fille!" comme aucune autre mère au monde.

Ce soir-là nous avions donc l'honneur de posséder *ma jeune fille* et *Madame Mère*. Miss Amalia détaillait les poésies. Gainée dans une robe molle à la Théodora, coiffée d'énormes touffes de fleurs à la Gismonda, les bras plus chargés d'anneaux que ceux de Cléopâtre, elle avait déjà animé de sa voix mordante et mis sur pied, d'un geste, deux assez fades pièces de vers; elle déclamait maintenant, au milieu du silence, un assez beau sonnet, mais d'un ton plutôt vif, écrit en l'honneur de Madame Greene:

O grande inassouvie, esclave d'une lyre
Divinement savante et triste et chère au
choeur
Des souffrantes pleurant l'infini de leur
cœur,
J'admire ton tourment et comprend ton
délire.

Un ronflement sonore interrompit soudain les périodes cadencées. Miss Amalia s'arrête rougissante, interdite.

Madame Greene debout défaille suffoquée. Quel était le malhonnête qui se permettait? . . . Et le ronflement continuait bruyant. . . . Tous les invités se lèvent inquisiteurs et découvrent dans un coin obscur *Madame Mère* endormie! La bonne

dame s'était béatement assoupie au bercement harmonieux de la diction de sa jeune fille; affalée dans une bergère, elle ronflait en dodelinant de la tête!

Ce fut pour ce soir-là la fin malencontreuse de nos plaisirs intellectuels!



EPISTLE TO MAIDENS

DEAR Edyth, Alys, Kathryn and
 Dear many another maiden:
 An explanation I demand;
 My heart with grief you've laden.
 Think you to do without the i's?
 My dears, what doth possess you?
 To leave out eyes and think that y's
 Can fill their place—Lord bless you!
 To drop the eyes at times is right—
 I'd even recommend it;
 It is a very fetching sight,
 And good results attend it.
 But drop them not forever, then
 Shalt not learn late for sorrow,
 Who drops and finds her eyes again
 May play the trick to-morrow.
 Wisdom in women doth no harm;
 The wise may find a lover;
 But more the eyes have power to charm,
 A hundred times and over.
 So, maidens, as I said before,
 Why cause me all this worry?
 Just take the good old names once more,
 And do it in a hurry.
 Be wise, you'll then need not the y's;
 Cease trivial tricks so stupid.
 Reclaim, I beg, these banished i's.
 Yours, in a blue funk,

QPYD.

TRUMAN ROBERTS ANDREWS.



HE—Do I obstruct your view, my dear?
 SHE—Oh, no; I can always see through you, you know.



IT is frequently observed that those who are born to command are not necessarily born to be obeyed.

AN INTERVAL OF SPLENDOR

By Randolph Forbes

DOWN the room several tables from where Mrs. De Beixedon sat at Mrs. Le Fontaine's West Side boarding-house was the Woman that Looked like Bernhardt. They always called Mrs. Dorsey that. Someone had told her, three or four years before she made her appearance at Mrs. Le Fontaine's, that she resembled the great actress, and it had completely turned her head. Paul Gaynor found out that immediately after this compliment had been paid her by an elderly gentleman, she had taken up French and could now speak a number of phrases. He used to talk to her whenever her husband would let her converse with another man.

Mrs. De Beixedon used to wonder where the pair got the money for their board. She was a speculator, but she knew very well Dorsey could not be one, or he would have brought in more revenue now and again. And they ate a great deal, she noticed; though in spite of this Mrs. Dorsey managed to retain her refined slenderness. Gaynor used to enjoy watching the husband, who would remain in the dining-room when almost all the others had left after dinner, in order slyly to slip some fruit or a little cake into the back pocket of his cutaway coat. He used to blush, when caught, which Gaynor took to be a redeeming sign. Perhaps he had not always done such things.

Mrs. Dorsey was not old—far from it. She was about twenty-eight, which to Mrs. De Beixedon, who was *passée*, seemed very, very young.

Bernhardt—as they always called her behind her back—knew that red was her color. She did dress well—even the women in the house had to admit that. There are some women who can dress on almost nothing a year and always look well, and every man likes to have such a woman for his wife. Mr. Bernhardt—they always called him that, too—had nothing but admiration for his really good-looking wife. He was older than she by a great many years. Some said he had been married before, but nobody cared much. It was Bernhardt that everybody liked. She was silly, they said, and exceedingly vain; but then she was magnetic and fascinating.

To-night she wore red. Gaynor, who sat at Mrs. De Beixedon's table, noticed that as the room filled she bowed to everybody. Her spirits were high. He could hear faintly her gay chatter to her husband and the one other man who sat at her table. There was one vacant place. Gaynor sometimes secretly wished that one of Mrs. De Beixedon's or Mrs. Huntington's relatives would come to New York for a visit, so that he could find an excuse for going over to Bernhardt's table, at least for a while. She had always seemed to like him, too, for he was near her own age. They chatted sometimes in the drawing-room, but she never became confidential beyond a certain point. There are many such people, and they are always aggravating, especially if one wants to find out something, as one often does. Gaynor was not over-curious, but he would

have liked to know where Bernhardt got the pin-money the women told him she spent.

There was a wide-spread feeling in the house that Mr. Bernhardt was supported by his wife. He gave the impression himself—that unconscious air which a man in such a position invariably has, whether he is in the company of his wife or not—always listening for what she will say next, always hiding his own cleverness (if he has any) and letting hers shine the more. There was no doubt that Bernhardt was the ruler. She gave that impression in a hundred little ways. It was true that Mr. Bernhardt went down-town every day; but a great many men do that. Some merely take luncheon there.

Later, in the drawing-room, Mrs. Dorsey was telling everybody that she and her husband were going to leave Mrs. Le Fontaine's.

"Is that why you're so radiant?" Gaynor ventured.

"Oh, no, indeed—and yes! We'll be back soon, though."

She was very lovely, he thought. Red was her color. Why didn't she always wear it? But then, of course, pink suited her just as well. Mr. Bernhardt was within hearing distance as he told her this. He could tell that the husband's ears were straining to catch the drift of their conversation.

"I'm going to see 'L'Aiglon' to-night," she told him a moment later. "You know I always did love Bernhardt."

"Of course you do. Why shouldn't you? It must be fine to see a woman you resemble so much, and to hear what the people around you have to say about her type of beauty. She's old, though. It must be like looking into an enchanted mirror for you."

Bernhardt loved compliments, but she said nothing now in reply to this; it simply brought the color to her cheeks and made her eyes sparkle with delight. She immediately began to discuss Rostand. Gaynor loved to talk of French lit-

erature to her. She knew more about it than most people gave her credit for. Once, in a burst of confidence, she told him she had read every one of Balzac's novels three times, except "Père Goriot," which she had devoured seven times. That was a record.

As soon as she went to the theatre Gaynor joined the group that Mrs. De Beixedon always had about her after dinner. It was jolly company, and the gossip was harmless, if sometimes a little malicious. But everybody's creed was, "If you don't gossip with anybody, nobody will gossip with you." Of course the theme to-night was the departure of the Dorseys.

"I really can't believe it," Mrs. De Beixedon was saying. "We'll all miss them. But what's bothering me is, where are they going? Why don't they tell somebody? It's funny. This is only December and not the time of year one goes to the country."

"That's so," Gaynor said. "I hadn't thought of that."

"You say she's been locked up in her room a great deal lately?" Mrs. Huntington inquired of Mrs. De Beixedon, who knew everything. "Maybe she paints or——"

"No, she doesn't. I asked Matilda—" Matilda was one of the housemaids—"what she did, and she really didn't know. There are no brushes or paints in her room. I've been in it myself."

"I have it!" Gaynor cried. He slapped his hand on his knee; then he burst out laughing. The group gathered more closely together. Just then a girl at the other end of the room began to play on the piano, loudly. She wasn't in the De Beixedon clique.

"Tell us," some one said.

"It's only a wild notion, maybe; but I think she writes. I've noticed bundles of huge letters from publishing houses for her a great many mornings lately. I'm so crazy for my own mail, you know, I always see it as soon as the postman brings it."

Everybody laughed. Gaynor himself wrote verses for the magazines. One of the joys of writing poetry is that no one can tell by the size of the envelope whether your manuscripts have come back or not. But stories—the large package tells the tale. Yet proofs come that way, too, Gaynor thought. “I think she’s been writing a book,” he declared.

“And on the proceeds she’s taking Mr. B. for an outing. Well, it will do them both good—especially him. He always looks to me as though he needed an airing,” said Mrs. De Beixedon.

II

GAYNOR dined at the Waldorf several evenings later with a number of young people. There was to be a theatre party afterward. Everyone was chattering. Suddenly one of the girls looked toward the main entrance of the dining-room, and said, “Oh, there’s Bernhardt! I didn’t know she was stopping here. How young she looks!”

Gaynor turned, as the rest did. He saw a red vision in the doorway, and a wizened, bald-headed man near by. It was his Bernhardt—not the actress. He had not known of her return to town. He tried to catch her eye. Presently she did see him. For a moment she seemed to look through him. Then she bowed, and a great color came to her cheeks. She and her husband passed on to the next door. There was no table for them in the room where Gaynor sat. He noticed that she attracted a great deal of attention, for her gown was a stunning one, and she herself was wonderful to-night.

After dinner—just for a moment—they met in the corridor. Who doesn’t meet in the Waldorf corridor?

“I didn’t know you’d come back,” he said.

She looked flushed. Maybe she had had champagne.

“We—we haven’t been away,” she seemed to stammer. Then she

laughed, rather hysterically. “We’re stopping here. Don’t tell, though! I love it! Come in, won’t you, some night?”

He saw it was the champagne. She was rather silly to-night! His friends discovered that it was not the real Bernhardt, and were disappointed.

He went to the hotel the following night—why, he could not have said, except that he was intensely interested.

The Dorseys were in their rooms—tiny affairs, away up on the twelfth floor. The windows opened on a court. There were cordials on the table. Almost as soon as Gaynor arrived Mr. Bernhardt asked to be excused. He said he had a terrible headache. So he went into the next room, and to bed. Gaynor thought that he looked very pale, and that his legs tottered.

“Well, isn’t this great?” she began, as soon as they were alone. “Have some *crème de menthe*. Do you wish it *frappée*. Yes? Oh, don’t! Did I ask you last night to call? Yes? Well, I’m awfully glad you came. You haven’t told anybody you saw us, have you? That’s good. We’ll be back at Mrs. Le Fontaine’s tomorrow. You see—well, I might as well tell you the whole story. It’s funny.” She laughed as she had the previous evening, in a hysterical way.

Gaynor simply held his cordial in one hand, and hardly knew what to say. She had on a red gown, he noticed, and her hair was done up bewitchingly.

“You’re interested? Yes? Well, my dear boy, I’m going to confess to you. I write.”

Gaynor smiled. “I half suspected it,” he said.

“So do you,” she went on. “That’s why I have a fellow-feeling for you. You’re in the craft, but I don’t suppose you’d like to be classed with me in the literary line. Your style is poetry—I do only trash—utter trash. But—well, I’ve made some money lately—a novel I sold out-

right. My name isn't signed to it, so you'll never know what it is. I'm ashamed of it, but then a few hundred dollars are not to be picked up every day. I told Richard if I made anything out of it we'd go off on a little spree, and we came here. We've been having a lovely time, too! And everybody takes me for Bernhardt, and I'm stared at so, and—oh, the days and nights have been divine! Have another *crème de menthe*. Don't you think the idea was funny? We fooled everybody—we're supposed to be off at some quiet place, but here we are in the heart of things, having the jolliest time. And would you believe it? I've got material enough for another novel. Yes, indeed. In the midst of all our fun I've been observing, and I'm ready for a new book. Yes, it is a good cordial. Mind, you mustn't tell anybody of this. You must promise. It was so silly of us, but then—one has only one life to lead, you know."

Gaynor wondered why on earth she was telling him all this. He could not imagine.

"I'm going to order a little supper in a few moments," she said, "but we'll have it down-stairs. Richard won't care—oh, no! He's asleep by this time, anyhow." She rattled on. She was radiant.

Later they went down-stairs. She insisted that he accompany her. There was champagne.

"And now, dear boy," she said, leaning her elbows on the table and looking at him with her wonderful eyes, "this is all over. Our holiday is done. Richard and I must go back to that humdrum house on the West Side. I've spent every cent. It's all over."

Like a flash it came to him. But he liked her, and he pitied her petty vanity.

"Yes, I've got to have a little money," she went on. "You don't know how it pains me to ask you, but you're the only one I can ask. See how the people are looking at us now! They think you're out with Bernhardt!"

"Yes, Bernhardt grown young again."

She smiled.

"Richard is helpless in this emergency. Oh, it's so good of you!" she said, as they left the room, she on his arm.

"I wonder where the Dorseys were?" Mrs. De Beixedon said the next night, at dinner, when she saw them come in.

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Gaynor; and he went on eating his fish.



THE EVENT OF THE DAY

HARK!

It is the dinner gong—
Sweet song
That sounds its echoing boom.

Mark
The guests, how now they throng
Headlong
Into the dining-room.

To dine, you say?
Oh, no; to play
Ping-pong!

FRANK M. BICKNELL.

THE TROUBLES OF THE PRINCE

By Alfred Henry Lewis

IT is that unfortunate season, the season between Winter and Spring, when nature, raw-cold, soaked of rain, and yet half-stiffened with belated frost, appears hesitant as one doubt-bitten over a proposal to push on. The fog lies sodden thick on Covent Garden. Here and there a few lamps, sparsely sown about the ways, glow through the mists dimly. These burn, if one may call it burning, in a heart-broken fashion, and give little or no light.

In the frowsy, unclean midst of Tavistock Row is a tavern; a low house of call this—the Salutation. A sign-board with two right hands, in what is meant for a grip of friendship, rudely painted thereon and half-defaced by years of weather, swings creakingly in front, like a malefactor on his gibbet. Over the low doorway, as demanded by the law, a smoky lamp, upheld on a rude bracket of iron, flares faintly and with as much of radiant assertion as might emanate from a glow-worm in failing health. The two windows of the bar-room of the Salutation blush rather than shine through the moist shadows of the night.

The bells of London have just beaten out “twelve o’clock;” but even their hard throats seem full of fog, and their voices stifled. Altogether it is an ill midnight in a locality of ill; and good and quiet folk have long ago deserted the streets, and, with woollen caps drawn tight, are snoring among the sheets.

Now comes a rough bevy, clad in smock frocks like carters, and obviously drunk. These are bent to give

the Covent Garden neighborhood a taste of their mettle as musicians. As they stagger along, they bawl loudly a ditty, but with no effort at concord or harmony:

“Good Sir Simon, the king,
And good Sir Simon, the king,
With his malmsey nose
And his wrinkled hose,
Then sing ye, hey ding-a-ding-ding!”

The vociferations cease as a cluster of watchmen approach, bearing in their midst a woman of the gin-cellars. She is foul, ragged, disheveled, and struggles with the strength of strong drink against her captors, reviling them in the basest language of St. Giles.

As the watchmen with their poor prey in their talons come up, the melodious carters, skin-full and staggering, make prompt war. The watch is composed of those ancient eighteenth-century grizzled “Charlies,” equipped of great-coat, stave and lantern, and as fit for the work of a constable as for the duties of Westminster’s dean. There is a prodigious scuffle; the watchmen are rolled in the mud; the woman whom they held in duress is not so drowned of drink but she steals away to safety through the night.

One of the carters, he who is youngest and drunkest, receives a cut over the eye from the stave of a “Charlie” old enough to be his grandfather. The stricken carter sheds sottish tears over his misfortune, and is consoled by one of the others, while the rest laugh uproariously. Meanwhile the aged peace-wardens are scrambling to their feet.

"Come into yonder crib," observes one of the carters, a tall, slender fellow, "and you shall each have a guinea for your pains."

This is to the tousled watchmen; it dissipates the last chance of further battle. Carters and watch, they all make for the Salutation; the stricken, youngest, drunkest carter still tearfully mourning the disaster to his brow.

"It is sure to blacken my eye," he groans; "and I shall look vilely at the Duchess of Devonshire's. What am I to do?"

"Go as *Othello*, Blackstock," jeers one of his companions, a rotund, portly carter, almost as wide and as thick as he is tall, who waddles drop-sically, like some drink-fuddled duck. "Go as *Othello*; and with your face all black, no one will notice."

"I'll 'ave a bit of raw beef on your peeper in a moment," says the carter who is sympathetic, as he aids the woful one toward the tavern door. "Your R'yal 'Ighness'll be as fit as a fiddle in no time; an' no black heye nor nothink."

The consolatory carter, who talks with an accent that carries a strong relish of Lewkner Lane, is of middle height; but with a great round barrel of a chest, and the mighty shoulders of a Hercules. This tender carter is sober, while the rest reel; also, it is he who knocked down the "Charlies," upending them with a rapid broad-side of blows that show him a specialist of fisticuffs. He is such in truth—no less a personage than England's champion boxer, Tom Johnson; on whom, when he beat the great Isaac Perrins, the Honorable Bullock won twenty thousand guineas. This was when Birmingham put forward five of her gladiators at once, and challenged the best five men of London town.

The injured carter is the Prince of Wales, son of the third George; the tall, slender carter is Richard Brinsley Sheridan; the rotund carter is Lord Surrey, later Duke of Norfolk, commonly known as "Jock o' Norfolk,"

who boasts himself a descendant of the Plantagenets; while the remaining two are, respectively, Colonel Hanger and the Honorable Berkeley—all bucks about town. Each is disguised in a scrubby wig, slouching hat, and a long carter's smock over his fine clothes.

The coterie pushes into the tap of the Salutation, an apartment rife with evil smells. The "Charlies" are disposed of at a guinea each, and vanish into the midnight, murmuring thanks and pulling their foretops. Two or three human birds of prey, who are drinking gin at tables, whisper among themselves, look askance at Champion Johnson, who in return eyes them with keen, suspicious hostility; then they slouch after the constables. The room is cleared of all save the Prince's party.

A female, slatternly and unkempt, unwieldy of form, rolled and folded in fat like a porpoise, with swollen face hideously ablaze with brandy, comes from a rear apartment. This is Mother Butler, the landlady of the Salutation. Mother Butler puffs and pants with asthmatic solicitude over the wound of her royal customer. For divers years he has honored her poor house by making it a kind of headquarters for his roysterings. Mother Butler's alarmed grief gains allayment when the injury is disclosed as one that does not call even for raw beef in its reform, but gains full relief from a square of coarse brown paper dampened and bound on the eye by Master Johnson.

Now the party, still in their smock frocks, adjourns to the tavern parlor, where a fire is made to blaze. Here Mother Butler at once furnishes forth sundry particular flasks of brandy and bottles of wine.

"Let me call the roll," says the Prince, as he casts himself on a settle convenient at once to fire and table. "Thinstock, are you present?"

"Here," responds Sheridan.

"Greystock?"

"Here," from the Honorable Berkeley.

"Lockstock?"

"Here," shouts Colonel Hanger.

"And Barrel?"

There comes a responsive growl from the girthy representative of the Plantagenets; the roster is complete. The Prince himself is Blackstock; and these make up the aliases under which it is the Prince's humor to upset and beat his Majesty's watch.

Our Prince is of age about twenty-three years. With his round face, full lips and good-natured nose—not a sage nose of thoughtful length, nor yet a Roman nose of beaky determination; but a mirth-loving, frivolous nose, pointed heavenward—he is rather a handsome fellow, but just now the brown paper, while it soothes, hardly adds to dignity.

Soon the Prince's humor turns to song.

"Let's have some music," he shouts. "Come, I'll set example, and sing a song myself. And it is original—I wrote it, note and word. It's an ode to old Rahère who founded St. Bartholomew's, centuries ago. Egad! I mean to do somewhat to keep up the memory of those old fathers—egad! I'll make a song to every saint. Here, Sherry!" This last in excited remonstrance as Sheridan decides to test the exhilarating value of Jock o' Norfolk's mingled wine and brandy; "don't drink that. Man, it'll eat the coats off your stomach!"

"Let my stomach digest in its waistcoat then," retorts Sheridan, as he coolly tosses off a glass. "Don't mind my experiments. I had a thought to solve, if I could, the secret of Jock's swinishness. I trust your Royal Highness will go on with your song."

"Yes, your R'yal 'Ighness," puts in the fighting man in a voice of unctuous adulation, "do go on. I do so love to 'ear your R'yal 'Ighness sing! It's as sweet as skylarks; or at the least, linnets."

"Very well," responds the Prince. "As I say, this is to that bald-headed old saint, Rahère, who built St. Bartholomew's. I wrote it, every line, syllable and flourish, while sitting in my powder closet having my hair done.

Here's to you, and every man jack is to join in the chorus:

"Sons of the fair, to Father Rahère
Chant a stave in a hollow mew;
Hosier Lane shout back the strain
Through the cloisters of old Bartholomew.

"Chorus—all together; give her tongue!

"Peace to the soul of the bald-pate droll,
Sound him a larry-cum-twang;
Toss off a toast to his good-natured ghost,
And let it come off with a bang!"

"Prodigious! prodigious!" exclaims the Honorable Berkeley, in high approval. "I like it vastly well. But haven't I heard something of the sort before?"

"Impossible!" retorts the Prince. "I made it yesterday, I tell you, as I walked in Pall Mall. It isn't twenty-four hours old."

Sheridan and the others shrug their shoulders, while gleams of amusement gather about their mouths. But the Prince notes nothing as he pours his wine.

Meanwhile Colonel Hanger and the Honorable Berkeley are whispering; they eye the Prince from time to time as he goes deeper and still deeper into the wine.

At last one overhears a word or two of this low-voiced conversation.

"Let us try him now," whispers Colonel Hanger, with a princeward glance. "I'll lay you two to one he's fuddled enough to rise to it."

"Mind you, we divide profits!" whispers the Honorable Berkeley. Then in loud, positive tones: "I say no; a goose will out-travel a turkey."

"Preposterous!" retorts Colonel Hanger, with a roar and an air that seems composite of disgust and indignation. "Nonsense, man! A turkey will travel faster than a horse. The speed of a goose is no more to be compared with that of a turkey than is the wine-soaked wit of Jock there with the nimble faculties of Sherry."

"And I say a goose will outstrip a turkey," responds the Honorable Berkeley, heatedly. "I'll lay you what you please in thousands, and race goose

against turkey with you ten miles on any road in the country."

"What's all this, Hanger?" demands the Prince, agog with instant interest.

"Why, your Royal Highness," answers Colonel Hanger, and as one made weary with the very imbecility of such contention, "you know the turkey! indubitably the swiftest fowl afoot unless the ostrich; and yet Mr. Berkeley insists that a goose, waddling with webbed feet along a country road, will defeat a turkey for ten miles, and offers to wager thousands! Did your Royal Highness ever hear the like?"

"Berkeley, you're drunk," says the Prince, at once oracular and majestic. "No bird could beat a turkey; any bird would beat a goose." Then, loftily, "Colonel Hanger, if Mr. Berkeley persists in his absurd position, you must wager with him. Egad, sir, I'll have half myself!"

Now befalls much of disputation. The ignoble rafters echo with "goose" and "turkey," and the question of their powers as pedestrians. In this, the year of our Lord, 1784, in his Majesty's dominions, all talk leads to wagers. It is, therefore, arranged between Colonel Hanger and the Honorable Berkeley to race twenty turkeys against twenty geese for five hundred guineas a side, ten miles on the Brighton road, to start from the Pig and Whistle, play or pay. The nineteenth of the coming May is pitched on for the day.

The Prince, on his part, plants himself in the midst of the debate; and since Colonel Hanger has for long been his betting mentor, the Prince doubtfully uplifts himself in the cause of turkey.

"Why, they are as fleet as shadows, Berkeley," shouts the Prince, "and, sir, you are drunk to doubt it."

Then the Prince drains another bumper, and makes a personal wager of three thousand guineas with the Honorable Berkeley, who sticks stolidly to goose.

At last, however, they weary of the bicker. They stagger up to depart

from the dingy parlor of the Salutation for regions more honorable. Out into the mists they wander, and, as they disappear in the darkness of Russell street, there floats backward to any listening ear of Tavistock Row a roaring refrain:

"What can Tommy Onslow do?
He can drive a phaëton and two.
Can Tommy Onslow do no more?
Yes; he can drive a phaëton and four."

II

THE pure darkness of a fair, clear night has settled on the Green Park. Across is Devonshire House—that hot-bed of Whiggery and hatred of the King. Devonshire House is the theatre of festivities, all lights and music, flare and blare, wax and brass. It is a gay crowd, and, as the set political makes the set social in these days of ardent politics, they are all for Fox—all for the Whigs.

"George," Walpole is saying to Selwyn, "it is folly for us oldsters to be here. I, who have kissed the hand of George the First, have no colt's tooth for present days. We should have stayed away. Nothing is so ridiculous as an antique face in a juvenile drawing-room."

The sweet Duchess of Devonshire has approached, and is listening.

"Sir, you are as young as the youngest," she observes, beamingly, to the aged master of Strawberry Hill. "You teach us there are no wrinkles on the heart."

"Your grace is a mirror of beautiful youth to say so," responds Walpole, with gay gallantry. "There; I pay compliment for compliment."

"Egad, you but do her grace justice where she does us favor!" breaks in Selwyn. "Of a truth, Horry, I never look on our fair friend without losing twenty years."

"You are a pair of pleasant, flattering bachelors," retorts the smiling duchess; "and every moment of your society puts me under a fluttering cross-fire of fear and fascination."

"Come, now," responds Selwyn, "I will quarrel with Horry over that. Which one of us fascinates and which one frightens your grace? If old Horry be the latter, I shall send him the measure of my sword at dawn, maugre his great age."

"You have closed my mouth," laughs the duchess. "I shall assuredly frame no differences between two who own such tender eminence in my esteem."

Fox and Sheridan join the three banterers in the corner.

"What now, then!" exclaims Selwyn to Sheridan, as the latter and Fox come up; "what now! Do you look here for the raw material of another 'School for Scandal'?"

"Wrong, George," says Sheridan, with an easy smile. "Man, you do yourself half justice. I come from pure love of your conversation. Every word you utter holds me. When you jest, I applaud your accuracy, and I'm lost in amazement over your powers of imagination whenever you deign to state a fact."

Selwyn smiles while he winces. The two dislike each other. And the old wit fears the younger; a trifle stiffened of age, he fears himself over-matched by the agile Sheridan.

"I've been trying to uphold the spirits of our friend of Berkeley Square and Strawberry Hill," says the duchess to Fox. The softened glances of these two as they turn to one another tell of their covert love. "I've tried to cheer him," she goes on, "but he will have it that he misplaces his age by coming here."

"And really, I'm earnest," observes Walpole. "It can hardly be called grateful or proper when old ones like George and myself insist on haunting posterity."

"Look at old North," cries Selwyn, pointing to that antiquated statesman who, as the dark centre of a sparkling bevy, is doing the boyish extremely ill. "Look at old North! Does not the rôle of a gallivanting grandfather set him hideously? I could think of him as Young said of Voltaire:

"Thou art so wicked, lively and so thin,
Thou art at once the Devil, Death and Sin."

There is a hubbub in the outer halls and the tramp of many marching feet. A moment later enters the Prince with his party. Thirteen they are, and whimsically wrapped in the rough enveloping dress of gray friars, the hood drawn over so as to hide the face. The invading monks chant a hymn under the leadership of Captain Morris, who is at their head, and who has written verse and music for the occasion.

On the heels of the hymn, the tuneful churchmen cast aside their husks and blaze resplendent in bright velvets and gold laces. The Prince is in radiant uniform as the colonel of his regiment, the Tenth Light Dragoons.

He comes to greet the quartette in the corner.

"And still I can't make out," observes his Highness, following a discussion of the Goose *versus* Turkey wager of Covent Garden, "and still I can't make out what Berkeley is at by the bet. Hanger and I feared that a bite lurked somewhere in the business, so to-day we had a turkey and a goose into Carlton House. We raced them in the great *escaglio* saloon, where there was plenty of room, and there's no comparison! The goose afoot is a hopeless drone, a perfect snail! Master Turkey flew by him like a meteor. I can't account for it—the wager, I mean—save on the thought that poor Berkeley is mad."

"We must never call our friends mad," remonstrates Selwyn, the cynic, "until they are bankrupt. Has Berkeley money?"

"He certainly has some," says the Prince.

"Then he's still sane," continues Selwyn, sagely. "The highest social authorities are agreed that a man must lose his money before he loses his mind."

"That is a very queer doctrine," replies the Prince, doubtfully.

"It is a doctrine of high reason, your Royal Highness," retorts Sel-

wyn, "and in exact accord with an age when one's banking book is accepted as the only full and proper biography."

"Well, George," responds the Prince with a sigh, "if what you say be true, then am I an utter imbecile, for I am utterly moneyless. And, by the way, Charlie," this to Fox, "Harris came to me from the King to talk of paying my debts. I had him in while Hanger and I raced the fowls. I told him I owed one hundred and sixty thousand pounds; and I offered to travel in France, *incognito*, that is, as the Earl of Chester, if the King would arrange an income that would pay me out. But Harris refused. He said that no Prince of Wales should go to Paris save as went the Black Prince. No; Harris would have none of that. He said the King would pay my debts on one condition, and only one: I must break with the Whigs and you. Egad! at that I ordered the meddler out of Carlton House, and went on with my turkey and goose. I'll never leave you, Charlie. Sink or swim with my friends, as I told Sherry, is my word. And speaking of sinking, how goes your affair of Westminster?"

"Hood and Lord Cecil Wray will contest against me," responds Fox; "but I've no fears."

"Hood!" exclaims Walpole, bitterly. "And a proper member of the House would be that Hood! Why, he's any man's member who'll buy. He should walk into the Commons with 'To Let' written across his forehead."

"Add 'Unfurnished,'" amends Sheridan.

"Really," says Fox, as the Prince moves away to join the Duchess of Devonshire and her sister, "the Prince feels his debts. I wish the next Parliament, whether it be Tory or Whig, would pay them, and have an end."

"And Parliament should do so," says Walpole.

"You are indeed the last, Horry," comments Selwyn, "whom I expected to hear say so."

"And why, sir?" retorts Walpole, a little warmly. "I have ever held that folk who keep monkeys should pay for the glasses they break."

"Monkey!" exclaims Sheridan, not a little shocked. "That is scarce respectful to his Royal Highness."

"There is classic precedent for it at least," answers Walpole. "It was Philip of Macedon who first said, 'Call a spade a spade.'"

III

It is a day drowsy and rural. In that excellent inn, the Pig and Whistle, the Prince is taking his ease. With him are Colonel Hanger, the Honorable Berkeley and that valued last of the Plantagenets, honest Jock o' Norfolk. In front of the Pig and Whistle are two great coops or crates, whereof one houses twenty lean, alert turkeys and the other twenty lymphatic geese. The great race is to be presently afoot.

"We might better wait until quite late in the afternoon, your Royal Highness," says Colonel Hanger to his princely partner of this wager. "There will be no more than three hours required by our turkeys to do ten miles. And the road will be more free of carts; and the air better."

"I think so, too, Hanger," replies the Prince. "Between us, it's so sure a thing that I've put on the pot in earnest. I've managed to get up fifteen thousand pounds with Berkeley. I suppose he's good?"

"Undoubtedly, your Royal Highness," says Hanger. "Your money from Berkeley when we win is as sure as the bank."

"Of course," says the Prince, easily. "Only I do hope, egad! he'll not ask time, but will pony on the nick. By the way, what are the rules? We two are to drive our turkeys while Berkeley and Jock are to drive their geese. Do you hear, Jock? You and Berkeley are to drive the geese!"

"Berkeley may drive them," growls honest Jock, already dull with drink.

"I'll not touch foot to turnpike in the business."

"But your money, man!" remonstrates the Prince.

"I care not," responds the stubborn Jock. "I'll turn gooseherd for no man's money." And the determined Plantagenet beats the table with a beer-mug by way of emphasis.

The Honorable Berkeley comes in from some last preparations. He gives a meaning glance at Colonel Hanger, and says: "It's well after five o'clock, your Royal Highness, and we will begin our race whenever it is your pleasure."

"Egad!" says the Prince, springing up. "We may as well be about it. The more so, since Jock is getting drunk. He says he'll not drive the geese with you."

"That's of no consequence," laughs the Honorable Berkeley; "one can drive as well as twenty."

"I'll take a half-dozen bottles and follow you with a phaëton," says honest Jock, as though proposing a compromise.

Now they are on the road. The geese, pursued by Berkeley, waddle desperately. The fleet turkeys, with the Prince and Hanger behind them, are far ahead. The Prince and Hanger are equipped with poles; these have long red pennons at the end, the better to guide the racers. Each has slung over his shoulder a little sack of meal and corn, wherewith to coax their charges should they wax unruly.

For an hour, with the geese getting further and still further behind, the race goes forward. The turkeys are two miles ahead.

"What could have possessed Berkeley to make this match?" marvels the Prince to Hanger. "The man must be truly daft."

Another hour goes by; the turkeys have come eight miles; they have an open lead over the lethargic geese of four miles.

But now the evening shadows are beginning to fall. The turkeys commence to utter small, purring notes,

and stretch their slim necks. The Prince observes these symptoms, but does not understand them. He trudges confidently behind, ever and anon touching up some laggard, rearward turkey with his pole.

"Only two miles more, Hanger," cries the Prince, as they pass a milestone.

There is a heavy fluttering beat of wings, and a turkey alights on the low bough of one of the trees that rank the road. There he tips and teeters daintily.

"Zooks! do you see that?" exclaims his Highness.

Then the Prince pokes the retiring turkey from his perch with the useful, rag-decked pole. As he does so, three other turkeys flop heavily aloft and find perches in the tree. The Prince attacks these; they are dislodged, only to have their places filled by at least ten of their sleep-overtaken brothers.

It is scant use! The Prince and Colonel Hanger hurry from tree to tree; they shout and thrash with their poles; the wary turkeys only go higher out of reach; then they settle inveterately to their night's rest. At this the Prince pulls out a yard of the finest cambric, and mops his forehead.

"What think you, Hanger?" says the Prince.

"I think, your Royal Highness," says Hanger, "we may as well save ourselves exertion. It is clear the birds won't go another foot."

An hour passes, diversified by an occasional "yeep" from some somnolent turkey far overhead in the trees. At each yeep the Prince swears profusely. To maintain an appearance, Hanger matches the Prince with oath for oath. Both are in a high fume when the advance guard of the geese arrives.

These noble fowls—whose forefathers saved Rome—are in demure single file; a most sapient captain gander in the fore. They travel the faster the darker it gets; they are no purblind turkeys! and the night is the day of your goose! The sedate

procession waddles past. They press onward to the goal. The geese are winners, with the turkeys asleep two miles away in their trees.

"Egad!" exclaims the Prince, with a regretful yawn, as the Plantagenet arrives with his flasks, "egad! I never realized what night-howlets those geese of Berkeley's were! And

I'm glad I didn't compound with Harris the other day; for now, d'ye see, Jock, my debts have gone to one hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds."

"That will not hurt the flavor of the wine, whatever," and the wise Plantagenet breaks another bottle's neck.



WHEN EVE HAD COME

WHEN eve had come, and thicker grew
The shadows all the garden through,
Beside the rose-embowered gate,
Her laughter stilled. To speak, or wait—
Oh, beating heart, what should I do!

Long lashes hid her eyes of blue,
Twin violets befringed with dew;
Or was it tears, that shining freight,
When eve had come?

I am not one to love, and rue;
I caught the trembling sigh she drew,
And like a wild bird to his mate
I told my love with heart elate,
And felt the rapture Adam knew,
When Eve had come.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



HYPNOTIC

THE woman at the head of the table, beautiful in the glow of the golden lamp on silver and china, gazed fixedly on the man at the opposite end.

He felt the strange influence of that look, and lifted his eyes to hers.

"Oh, it's all right, Maria," he said, cheerfully; "I posted your letter when I went out this morning."



A STAR-GAZER

HEWITT—Gruet says his business is looking up.
JEWETT—Of course it is: he's an astronomer.

MORVA

By Marvin Dana

I SAW her figure outlined in black against the soft splendor of the sky as she stood on the crest of the bluff.

"Morva," I called, eagerly, and ran up the steep distance. So I came, panting, to her waiting arms.

Around us lay the still and somber beauty of the fiord. The naked rocks of the cliff fell in a precipice of black from our feet. The westering sun shone gently through gray mists—gently and sadly. Behind us rose the gloomy thicket of pines. The scene seemed saturated with mingled peace and sorrow. And this mood of nature was in sympathy with the emotion of our hearts. We loved, and now was the moment of our parting.

For a little we rested silent, breast to breast. Then I whispered, fondly:

"Thou lovest me, Morva? Thou lovest me, even me?" For I would hear again those fairest words from fairest lips.

And the answer came, soft as the murmur of the Summer airs that played about us:

"I love thee, thee alone, and forever."

Then Morva twined her arm about my neck, and again her lips met mine. In a moment she withdrew, blushing and confused. But I caught her arm as she dropped it from me, and, raising it, kissed her wrist.

My eyes rested on a strange mark where the sleeve had fallen back, leaving the rounded flesh visible.

I looked at this curiously, and I wondered that I had never before noticed it.

"What is this?" I questioned.

"It is a birth-mark," Morva answered. "My mother had the same sign on her arms—my grandmother, too."

"Her arms? Do you, then, have a like mark above the other wrist?"

Morva bared her right arm, and there, as on the one I held, was a curious line, like an S reversed, faintly red.

But soon I left off studying these, for my span of minutes with Morva was passing.

"And when I return from this journey," I said at last, "then, dearest, we are to become man and wife; then thou wilt be mine, Morva?"

"I am thine now," she murmured, "thine now and always."

"Thou wilt be mine in life and in death?" I asked, reverently, "even as I shall be thine?"

"Yes," Morva made answer, "in death as in life, thine forever."

The sun had passed, and the mysterious pathos of twilight on the fiords moved me to morbid dreaming.

"If thou diest, Morva, wilt thou yet prove to me that thy love is not dead?"

"Even so."

The hour of our farewell had sped. I strode from her side, and set off running down the slope, for I feared lest my strength should fail me. I turned away from the lovely girl, fled from the delicious thrall her lithe grace and dainty beauty put upon me. Yet, though I left her weeping, and though sorrow throbbed in my heart-beats, a subtle joy was in me, for our love was perfect—she was mine and I was hers, forever and forever.

The wind had freshened; now it threatened a gale. Alone in my berth I mused, disconsolate, on my condition—a puppet of the elements, thousands of miles from land, thousands of miles from Morva! The dread of death descended on me. I lay cowering and shuddering as the ship lurched and strained. My soul was filled with fear, whilst I listened to the howling of the wind, to the roaring surge. Usually I thought little of these things at such a time, for I am not a coward by nature. But this night I could not master the nervousness that beset me. I felt a horrible fear of evils vague, unknown, infinite.

Overcome by the sudden and strange oppression that lay upon my spirits, I sprang out of my berth, threw a dressing-gown about me, and went from the cabin. I hurried down the passage, clambered up the companionway, and in a moment stood on the upper deck.

The ship was rolling and plunging, and I had need to cling to a stanchion for support. Now and again a sea broke over the vessel, so that I was soon drenched; yet I stood there unheeding, fascinated and appalled by the awful majesty of the storm. The sky was inky black, covered with rolling masses of fury, whence flamed the lightnings. The flashes showed the expanse of waters, leaping and writhing as in an agony of torture. And the deeps of my spirit danced to the same measure of unrest.

Something touched my cheek. Through all the roar and riot of the sea I heard a gentle sound, soft as the flut-

tering of angels' wings. Amid the scourgings of the spray I felt the dainty touch upon my face, light as the petals of a rose.

I raised my hand to my cheek. Something clung to my fingers, clung delicately, yet firmly. I lifted my hand to the level of my eyes, but in the moment's darkness I could see nothing.

Then again the lightnings shone, and by their light I saw the thing that rested on my fingers—a little butterfly.

I stared at it in amazement. How came it here, here on the waste, remote from land, remote from the flowers it loved? How came it here in the wrath of the storm, this creature of sunshine and Summer zephyrs?

A bolt fell twisting from the heavens, and its blue glory lay over all. In this light I saw clearly once again, and now I noted the prismatic beauty of the butterfly's wings, where thronging colors harmonized.

The lightning's glow vanished, and darkness returned. I could no longer see, but a strange power held my eyes rigid, focused for sight.

Once again the sky was rent asunder, and the fiery lances were shivered against the ocean's breast. This time I saw and understood. On each wing was a curving line of faintest rose, a line shaped like the letter S reversed.

In that instant the butterfly moved its wings, and flew upward. The heavens opened and the moon shone on the night. By that light I caught one last glimpse of tremulous wings, as the messenger of love and death vanished into the heart of the storm.



AT ONE A. M.

“YOU'RE the light of my life,” she whispered,
As he kissed her once more good night.
And then from the top of the stairway
Came a voice, “Well, put out the light!”

MADAME BO-PEEP, OF THE RANCHES

By O. Henry

“AUNT ELLEN,” said Octavia, cheerfully, as she threw her black kid gloves carefully at the dignified Persian cat on the window-seat, “I’m a pauper.”

“You are so extreme in your statements, Octavia, dear,” said Aunt Ellen, mildly, looking up from her paper. “If you find yourself temporarily in need of some small change for bonbons, you will find my purse in the drawer of the writing-desk.”

Octavia Beaupree removed her hat and seated herself on a footstool near her aunt’s chair, clasping her hands about her knees. Her slim and flexible figure, clad in a modish mourning costume, accommodated itself easily and gracefully to the trying position. Her bright and youthful face, with its pair of sparkling, life-enamoured eyes, tried to compose itself to the seriousness that the occasion seemed to demand.

“You good auntie, it isn’t a case of bonbons; it is abject, staring, unpicturesque poverty, with ready-made clothes, gasolined gloves, and probably one-o’clock dinners all waiting with the traditional wolf at the door. I’ve just come from my lawyer, auntie, and, ‘Please, ma’am, I ain’t got nothink ’t all. Flowers, lady? Buttonhole, gentleman? Pencils, sir, three for five, to help a poor widow?’ Do I do it nicely, auntie, or, as a bread-winning accomplishment, were my lessons in elocution entirely wasted?”

“Do be serious, my dear,” said Aunt Ellen, letting her paper fall to the floor, “long enough to tell me what you mean. Colonel Beaupree’s estate——”

“Colonel Beaupree’s estate,” interrupted Octavia, emphasizing her words with appropriate dramatic gestures, “is of Spanish castellar architecture. Colonel Beaupree’s resources are—wind. Colonel Beaupree’s stocks are—water. Colonel Beaupree’s income is—all in. The statement lacks the legal technicalities to which I have been listening for an hour, but that is what it means when translated.”

“Octavia!” Aunt Ellen was now visibly possessed by consternation. “I can hardly believe it. And it was the impression that he was worth a million. And the De Peysters themselves introduced him!”

Octavia rippled out a laugh, and then became properly grave.

“*De mortuis nil*, auntie—not even the rest of it. The dear old colonel—what a gold brick he was, after all! I paid for my bargain fairly—I’m all here, am I not?—items: eyes, fingers, toes, youth, old family, unquestionable position in society as called for in the contract—no wild-cat stock here.” Octavia picked up the morning paper from the floor. “But I’m not going to ‘squeal’—isn’t that what they call it when you rail at Fortune because you’ve lost the game?” She turned the pages of the paper calmly. “‘Stock-market’—no use for that. ‘Society’s doings’—that’s done. Here is my page—the wish column. A Van Dresser could not be said to ‘want’ for anything, of course. ‘Chambermaids, cooks, canvassers, stenographers’——”

“Dear,” said Aunt Ellen, with a little tremor in her voice, “please do not talk in that way. Even if

your affairs are in so unfortunate a condition, there is my three thousand—”

Octavia sprang up lithely, and deposited a smart kiss on the delicate cheek of the prim little elderly maid.

“Blessed auntie, your three thousand is just sufficient to insure your Hyson to be free from willow leaves and keep the Persian in sterilized cream. I know I’d be welcome, but I prefer to strike bottom like Beelzebub rather than hang around like the Peri listening to the music from the side entrance. I’m going to earn my own living. There’s nothing else to do. I’m a— Oh, oh, oh!—I had forgotten. There’s one thing saved from the wreck. It’s a corral—no, a ranch in—let me see—Texas; an asset, dear old Mr. Bannister called it. How pleased he was to show me something he could describe as unencumbered! I’ve a description of it among those stupid papers he made me bring away with me from his office. I’ll try to find it.”

Octavia found her shopping-bag, and drew from it a long envelope filled with type-written documents.

“A ranch in Texas,” sighed Aunt Ellen. “It sounds to me more like a liability than an asset. Those are the places where the centipedes are found, and cowboys, and fandangos.”

“‘The Rancho de las Sombras,’” read Octavia from a sheet of violently purple type-writing, “‘is situated one hundred and ten miles southeast of San Antonio, and thirty-eight miles from its nearest railroad station, Nopal, on the I. and G. N. Ranch consists of 7,680 acres of well-watered land, with title conferred by State patents, and 22 sections, or 14,080 acres, partly under yearly running lease and partly bought under State’s twenty-year-purchase act. Eight thousand graded merino sheep, with the necessary equipment of horses, vehicles and general ranch paraphernalia. Ranch house built of brick, with six rooms comfortably furnished according to the requirements of the climate. All within a strong barbed-wire fence.

“‘The present ranch manager seems to be competent and reliable, and is rapidly placing upon a paying basis a business that, in other hands, had been allowed to suffer from neglect and misconduct.

“‘This property was secured by Colonel Beaupree in a deal with a Western irrigation syndicate, and the title to it seems to be perfect. With careful management and the natural increase of land values, it ought to be made the foundation for a comfortable fortune for its owner.’”

When Octavia ceased reading, Aunt Ellen uttered something as near a sniff as her breeding permitted.

“The prospectus,” she said, with uncompromising metropolitan suspicion, “doesn’t mention the centipedes, or the Indians. And you never did like mutton, Octavia. I don’t see what advantage you can derive from this—desert.”

But Octavia was in a trance. Her eyes were steadily regarding something quite beyond their focus. Her lips were parted, and her face was lighted by the kindling furor of the explorer, the ardent, stirring disquiet of the adventurer. Suddenly she clasped her hands together exultantly.

“The problem solves itself, auntie,” she cried. “I’m going to that ranch. I’m going to live on it. I’m going to learn to like mutton, and even concede the good qualities of centipedes—at a respectful distance. It’s just what I need. It’s a new life that comes when my old one is just ending. It’s a release, auntie; it isn’t a narrowing. Think of the gallops over those leagues of prairies, with the wind tugging at the roots of your hair, the coming close to the earth and learning over again the stories of the growing grass and the little wild flowers without names! Glorious is what it will be. Shall I be a shepherdess with a Watteau hat, and a crook to keep the bad wolves from the lambs, or a typical Western ranch girl, with short hair, like the pictures of her in the Sunday papers? I think the latter. And they’ll have my picture, too, with the

wild-cats I've slain, single-handed, hanging from my saddle horn. 'From the Four Hundred to the Flocks' is the way they'll headline it, and they'll print photographs of the old Van Dresser mansion and the church where I was married. They won't have my picture, but they'll get an artist to draw it. I'll be wild and woolly, and I'll grow my own wool."

"Octavia!" Aunt Ellen condensed into the one word all the protests she was unable to utter.

"Don't say a word, auntie. I'm going. I'll see the sky at night fit down on the world like a big butter-dish cover, and I'll make friends again with the stars that I haven't had a chat with since I was a wee child. I wish to go. I'm tired of all this. I'm glad I haven't any money. I could bless Colonel Beaupree for that ranch, and forgive him for all his bubbles. What if the life will be rough and lonely! I—I deserve it. I shut my heart to everything except that miserable ambition. I—oh, I wish to go away, and forget—forget!"

Octavia swerved suddenly to her knees, laid her flushed face in her aunt's lap, and shook with turbulent sobs.

Aunt Ellen bent over her, and smoothed the coppery-brown hair.

"I didn't know," she said, gently; "I didn't know—that. Who was it, dear?"

When Mrs. Octavia Beaupree, *née* Van Dresser, stepped from the train at Nopal, her manner lost, for the moment, some of that easy certitude which had always marked her movements. The town was of recent establishment, and seemed to have been hastily constructed of undressed lumber and flapping canvas. The element that had congregated about the station, though not offensively demonstrative, was clearly composed of citizens accustomed to and prepared for rude alarms.

Octavia stood on the platform, against the telegraph office, and attempted to choose by intuition from the swaggering, straggling string of loungers, the manager of the Rancho de

las Sombras, who had been instructed by Mr. Bannister to meet her there. That tall, serious-looking, elderly man in the blue flannel shirt and white tie she thought must be he. But, no; he passed by, removing his gaze from the lady as hers rested on him, according to the Southern custom. The manager, she thought, with some impatience at being kept waiting, should have no difficulty in selecting her. Young women wearing the most recent thing in ash-colored traveling suits were not so plentiful in Nopal!

Thus, keeping a speculative watch on all persons of possible managerial aspect, Octavia, with a catching breath and a start of surprise, suddenly became aware of Teddy Westlake hurrying along the platform in the direction of the train—of Teddy Westlake or his sun-browned ghost in cheviot, boots and leather-girdled hat—Theodore Westlake, Jr., amateur polo (almost) champion, all-round butterfly and cumberer of the soil; but a broader, surer, more emphasized and determined Teddy than the one she had known a year ago when last she saw him.

He perceived Octavia at almost the same time, deflected his course, and steered for her in his old, straight-forward way. Something like awe came upon her as the strangeness of his metamorphosis was brought into closer range; the rich, red-brown of his complexion brought out so vividly his straw-colored mustache and steel-gray eyes. He seemed more grown-up, and, somehow, farther away. But, when he spoke, the old, boyish Teddy came back again. They had been friends from childhood.

"Why, 'Tave!" he exclaimed, unable to reduce his perplexity to coherence. "How—what—when—where?"

"Train," said Octavia; "necessity; ten minutes ago; home. Your complexion's gone, Teddy. Now, how—what—when—where?"

"I'm working down here," said Teddy. He cast side glances about the station as one does who tries to combine politeness with duty.

"You didn't notice on the train," he asked, "an old lady with gray curls and a poodle, who occupied two seats with her bundles and quarreled with the conductor, did you?"

"I think not," answered Octavia, reflecting. "And you haven't, by any chance, noticed a big, gray-mustached man in a blue shirt and six-shooters, with little flakes of merino wool sticking in his hair, have you?"

"Lots of 'em," said Teddy, with symptoms of mental delirium under the strain. "Do you happen to know any such individual?"

"No; the description is imaginary. Is your interest in the old lady whom you describe a personal one?"

"Never saw her in my life. She's painted entirely from fancy. She owns the little piece of property where I earn my bread and butter—the Rancho de las Sombras. I drove up to meet her according to arrangement with her lawyer."

Octavia leaned against the wall of the telegraph office. Was this possible? And didn't he know?

"Are you the manager of that ranch?" she asked, weakly.

"I am," said Teddy, with pride.

"I am Mrs. Beaupree," said Octavia, faintly, "but my hair never would curl, and I was polite to the conductor."

For a moment that strange, grown-up look came back, and removed Teddy miles away from her.

"I hope you'll excuse me," he said, rather awkwardly. "You see, I've been down here in the chaparral a year. I hadn't heard. Give me your checks, please, and I'll have your traps loaded into the wagon. José will follow with them. We travel ahead in the buckboard."

Seated by Teddy in a feather-weight buckboard, behind a pair of wild, cream-colored Spanish ponies, Octavia abandoned all thought for the exhilaration of the present. They swept out of the little town and down the level road toward the south. Soon the road dwindled and disappeared, and they struck across a world carpeted with an endless reach of curly mesquite grass.

The wheels made no sound. The tireless ponies bounded ahead at an unbroken gallop. The temperate wind, made fragrant by thousands of acres of blue and yellow wild flowers, roared gloriously in their ears. The motion was aerial, ecstatic, with a thrilling sense of perpetuity in its effect. Octavia sat silent, possessed by a feeling of elemental, sensual bliss. Teddy seemed to be wrestling with some internal problem.

"I'm going to call you *madama*," he announced as the result of his labors. "That is what the Mexicans will call you—they're nearly all Mexicans on the ranch, you know. That seems to me about the proper thing."

"Very well, Mr. Westlake," said Octavia, primly.

"Oh, now," said Teddy, in some consternation, "that's carrying the thing too far, isn't it?"

"Don't worry me with your beastly etiquette. I'm just beginning to live. Don't remind me of anything artificial. If only this air could be bottled! This much alone is worth coming for. Oh, look! there goes a deer!"

"Jack-rabbit," said Teddy, without turning his head.

"Could I—might I drive?" suggested Octavia, panting, with rose-tinted cheeks and the eye of an eager child.

"On one condition. Could I—might I smoke?"

"Forever!" cried Octavia, taking the lines with solemn joy. "How shall I know which way to drive?"

"Keep her sou' by sou'east, and all sail set. You see that black speck on the horizon under that lowermost Gulf cloud? That's a group of live-oaks and a landmark. Steer half-way between that and the little hill to the left. I'll recite you the whole code of driving rules for the Texas prairies: keep the reins from under the horses' feet, and swear at 'em frequent."

"I'm too happy to swear, Ted. Oh, why do people buy yachts or travel in palace-cars, when a buckboard and a pair of plugs and a Spring morning like this can satisfy all desire?"

"Now, I'll ask you," protested Teddy, who was futilely striking match after match on the dashboard, "not to call those denizens of the air plugs. They can kick out a hundred miles between daylight and dark." At last he succeeded in snatching a light for his cigar from the flame held in the hollow of his hands.

"Room!" said Octavia, intensely. "That's what produces the effect. I know now what I've wanted—scope—range—room!"

"Smoking-room," said Teddy, unsentimentally. "I love to smoke in a buckboard. The wind blows the smoke into you and out again. It saves exertion."

The two fell so naturally into their old-time good-fellowship that it was only by degrees that a sense of the strangeness of the new relations between them came to be felt.

"*Madama*," said Teddy, wonderingly, "however did you get it into your head to cut the crowd and come down here? Is it a fad now among the upper classes to trot off to sheep ranches instead of to Newport?"

"I was broke, Teddy," said Octavia, sweetly, with her interest centred upon steering safely between a Spanish dagger plant and a clump of chaparral; "I haven't a thing in the world but this ranch—not even any other home to go to."

"Come, now," said Teddy, anxiously but incredulously, "you don't mean it?"

"When my husband," said Octavia, with a shy slurring of the word, "died three months ago I thought I had a reasonable amount of the world's goods. His lawyer exploded that theory in a sixty-minute fully illustrated lecture. I took to the sheep as a last resort. Do you happen to know of any fashionable caprice among the gilded youth of Manhattan that induces them to abandon polo and club windows to become managers of sheep ranches?"

"It's easily explained in my case," responded Teddy, promptly. "I had to go to work. I couldn't have earned

my board in New York, so I chummed awhile with old Sandford, one of the syndicate that owned the ranch before Colonel Beaupree bought it, and got a place down here. I wasn't manager at first. I jogged around on ponies and studied the business in detail, until I got all the points in my head. I saw where it was losing and what the remedies were, and then Sandford put me in charge. I get a hundred dollars a month, and I earn it."

"Poor Teddy!" said Octavia, with a smile.

"You needn't. I like it. I save half my wages, and I'm as hard as a water plug. It beats polo."

"Will it furnish bread and tea and jam for another outcast from civilization?"

"The Spring shearing," said the manager, "just cleaned up a deficit in last year's business. Wastefulness and inattention have been the rule heretofore. The Autumn clip will leave a small profit over all expenses. Next year there will be jam."

When, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the ponies rounded a gentle, brush-covered hill, and then swooped, like a double cream-colored cyclone, upon the Rancho de las Sombras, Octavia gave a little cry of delight. A lordly grove of magnificent live-oaks cast an area of grateful, cool shade, whence the ranch had drawn its name, "de las Sombras"—of the shadows. The house, of red brick, one story, ran low and long beneath the trees. Through its middle, dividing its six rooms in half, extended a broad, arched passageway, picturesque with flowering cactus and hanging red earthen jars. A "gallery," low and broad, encircled the building. Vines climbed about it, and the adjacent ground was, for a space, covered with transplanted grass and shrubs. A little lake, long and narrow, glimmered in the sun at the rear. Further away stood the shacks of the Mexican workers, the corrals, wool sheds and shearing pens. To the right lay the low hills, splattered with dark patches of chaparral; to the left the unbounded green

prairie blending against the blue heavens.

"It's a home, Teddy," said Octavia, breathlessly; "that's what it is—it's a home."

"Not so bad for a sheep ranch," admitted Teddy, with excusable pride. "I've been tinkering on it at odd times."

A Mexican youth sprang from somewhere in the grass, and took charge of the creams. The mistress and the manager entered the house.

"Here's Mrs. MacIntyre," said Teddy, as a placid, neat, elderly lady came out upon the gallery to meet them. "Mrs. Mac, here's the boss. Very likely she will be wanting a hunk of bacon and a dish of beans after her drive."

Mrs. MacIntyre, the housekeeper, as much a fixture on the place as the lake or the live-oaks, received the imputation of the ranch's resources of refreshment with mild indignation, and was about to give it utterance when Octavia spoke.

"Oh, Mrs. MacIntyre, don't apologize for Teddy. Yes, I call him Teddy. So does everyone whom he hasn't duped into taking him seriously. You see, we used to cut paper dolls and play jackstraws together ages ago. No one minds what he says."

"No," said Teddy, "no one minds what he says, just so he doesn't do it again."

Octavia cast one of those subtle, sidelong glances toward him from beneath her lowered eyelids—a glance that Teddy used to describe as an upper-cut. But there was nothing in his ingenuous, weather-tanned face to warrant a suspicion that he was making an allusion—nothing. Beyond a doubt, thought Octavia, he had forgotten.

"Mr. Westlake likes his fun," said Mrs. MacIntyre, as she conducted Octavia to her rooms. "But," she added, loyally, "people around here usually pay attention to what he says when he talks in earnest. I don't know what would have become of this place without him."

Two rooms at the east end of the house had been arranged for the occupancy of the ranch's mistress. When she entered them a slight dismay seized her at their bare appearance and the scantiness of their furniture; but she quickly reflected that the climate was a semi-tropical one, and was moved to appreciation of the well-conceived efforts to conform to it. The sashes had already been removed from the big windows, and white curtains waved in the Gulf breeze that streamed through the wide jalousies. The bare floor was amply strewn with cool rugs; the chairs were inviting, deep, dreamy willows; the walls were papered with a light, cheerful olive. One whole side of her sitting-room was covered with books on smooth, unpainted pine shelves. She flew to these at once. Before her was a well-selected library. She caught glimpses of titles of volumes of fiction and travel not yet seasoned from the dampness of the press.

Presently, recollecting that she was now in a wilderness given over to mutton, centipedes and privations, the incongruity of these luxuries struck her, and, with intuitive feminine suspicion, she began turning to the fly-leaves of volume after volume. Upon each one was inscribed in fluent characters the name of Theodore Westlake, Jr.

Octavia, fatigued by her long journey, retired early that night. Lying upon her white, cool bed, she rested deliciously, but sleep coquetted long with her. She listened to faint noises whose strangeness kept her faculties on the alert—the fractious yelping of the coyotes, the ceaseless, low symphony of the wind, the distant booming of the frogs about the lake, the lamentation of a concertina in the Mexicans' quarters. There were many conflicting feelings in her heart—thankfulness and rebellion, peace and disquietude, loneliness and a sense of protecting care, happiness and an old, haunting pain.

She did what any other woman would have done—sought relief in a

wholesome tide of unseasonable tears, and her last words, murmured to herself before slumber, capitulating, came softly to woo her, were, "He has forgotten."

The manager of the Rancho de las Sombras was no dilettante. He was a "hustler." He was generally up, mounted and away of mornings before the rest of the household were awake, making the rounds of the flocks and camps. That was the duty of the *major-domo*, a stately old Mexican with a princely air and manner, but Teddy seemed to have a great deal of confidence in his own eyesight. Except in the busy seasons, he nearly always returned to the ranch to breakfast at eight o'clock, with Octavia and Mrs. MacIntyre, at the little table set in the central hallway, bringing with him a tonic and breezy cheerfulness full of the health and flavor of the prairies.

A few days after Octavia's arrival he made her get out one of her riding-skirts, and curtail it to a shortness demanded by the chaparral brakes.

With some misgivings she donned this and the pair of buckskin leggings he prescribed in addition, and, mounted upon a dancing pony, rode with him to view her possessions. He showed her everything—the flocks of ewes, muttons and grazing lambs, the dipping vats, the shearing pens, the uncouth merino rams in their little pasture, the water-tanks prepared against the Summer drought—giving account of his stewardship with a boyish enthusiasm that never flagged.

Where was the old Teddy that she knew so well? This side of him was the same, and it was a side that pleased her; but this was all she ever saw of him now. Where was his sentimentality—those old, varying moods of impetuous love-making, of fanciful, quixotic devotion, of heart-breaking gloom, of alternating, absurd tenderness and haughty dignity? His nature had been a sensitive one, his temperament bordering closely on the artistic. She knew that, besides be-

ing a follower of fashion and its fads and sports, he had cultivated tastes of a finer nature. He had written things, he had tampered with colors, he was something of a student in certain branches of art, and once she had been admitted to all his aspirations and thoughts. But now—and she could not avoid the conclusion—Teddy had barricaded against her every side of himself except one—the side that showed the manager of the Rancho de las Sombras and a jolly chum who had forgiven and forgotten. Queerly enough, the words of Mr. Bannister's description of her property came into her mind—"all inclosed within a strong barbed-wire fence."

"Teddy's fenced, too," said Octavia to herself.

It was not difficult for her to reason out the cause of his fortifications. It had originated one night at the Hammersmiths' ball. It occurred at a time soon after she had decided to accept Colonel Beaupree and his million, which was no more than her looks and the entrée she held to the inner circles were worth. Teddy had proposed with all his impetuosity and fire, and she looked him straight in the eyes, and said, coldly and finally: "Never let me hear any such silly nonsense from you again." "You won't," said Teddy, with a new expression around his mouth, and—now Teddy was inclosed within a strong barbed-wire fence.

It was on this first ride of inspection that Teddy was seized by the inspiration that suggested the name of Mother Goose's heroine, and he at once bestowed it upon Octavia. The idea, supported by both a similarity of names and identity of occupations, seemed to strike him as a peculiarly happy one, and he never tired of using it. The Mexicans on the ranch also took up the name, adding another syllable to accommodate their lingual incapacity for the final "p," gravely referring to her as "La Madama Bo-Peepy." Eventually it spread, and "Madame Bo-Peep's ranch" was

as often mentioned as the "Rancho de las Sombras."

Came the long, hot season from May to September, when work is scarce on the ranches. Octavia passed the days in a kind of lotus-eater's dream. Books, hammocks, correspondence with a few intimate friends, a renewed interest in her old water-color box and easel—these disposed of the sultry hours of daylight. The evenings were always sure to bring enjoyment. Best of all were the rapturous horseback rides with Teddy, when the moon gave light over the wind-swept leagues, chaperoned by the wheeling night-hawk and the startled owl. Often the Mexicans would come up from their shacks with their guitars and sing the weirdest of heart-breaking songs. There were long, cosy chats on the breezy gallery, and an interminable warfare of wits between Teddy and Mrs. MacIntyre, whose abundant Scotch shrewdness often more than over-matched the lighter humor in which she was lacking.

And the nights came, one after another, and were filed away by weeks and months—nights soft and languorous and fragrant, that should have driven Strephon to Chloe over wires however barbed, that might have drawn Cupid himself to hunt, lasso in hand, among those amorous pastures—but Teddy kept his fences up.

One July night Madame Bo-Peep and her ranch manager were sitting on the east gallery. Teddy had been exhausting the science of prognostication as to the probabilities of a price of twenty-four cents for the Autumn clip, and had then subsided into an anesthetic cloud of Havana smoke. Only as incompetent a judge as a woman would have failed to note long ago that at least a third of his salary must have gone up in the fumes of those imported Regalias.

"Teddy," said Octavia, suddenly, and rather sharply, "what are you working down here on a ranch for?"

"One hundred per," said Teddy, glibly, "and found."

"I've a good mind to discharge you."

"Can't do it," said Teddy, with a grin.

"Why not?" demanded Octavia, with argumentative heat.

"Under contract. Terms of sale respect all unexpired contracts. Mine runs until 12 P.M. December thirty-first. You might get up at midnight on that date and fire me. If you try it sooner I'll be in a position to bring legal proceedings."

Octavia seemed to be considering the prospects of litigation.

"But," continued Teddy, cheerfully, "I've been thinking of resigning, anyway."

Octavia's rocking-chair ceased its motion. There were centipedes in this country, she felt sure; and Indians; and vast, lonely, desolate, empty wastes; all within strong barbed-wire fence. There was a Van Dresser pride, but there was also a Van Dresser heart. She must know for certain whether or not he had forgotten.

"Ah, well, Teddy," she said, with a fine assumption of polite interest, "it's lonely down here; you're longing to get back to the old life—to polo and lobsters and theatres and balls."

"Never cared much for balls," said Teddy, virtuously.

"You're getting old, Teddy. Your memory is failing. Nobody ever knew you to miss a dance, unless it occurred on the same night with another one which you attended. And you showed such shocking bad taste, too, in dancing too often with the same partner. Let me see, what was that Forbes girl's name—the one with wall eyes—Mabel, wasn't it?"

"No; Adèle. Mabel was the one with the bony elbows. That wasn't wall in Adèle's eyes. It was soul. We used to talk sonnets together, and Verlaine. Just then I was trying to run a pipe line from the Pierian spring."

"You were on the floor with her,"

said Octavia, undeflected, "five times at the Hammersmiths'."

"Hammersmiths' what?" questioned Teddy, vacuously.

"Ball—ball," said Octavia, viciously. "What were we talking of?"

"Eyes, I thought," said Teddy, after some reflection; "and elbows."

"Those Hammersmiths," went on Octavia, in her sweetest society prattle, after subduing an intense desire to yank a handful of sunburnt, sandy hair from the head lying back contentedly against the canvas of the steamer chair, "had too much money. Mines, wasn't it? It was something that paid something to the ton. You couldn't get a glass of plain water in their house. Everything at that ball was dreadfully overdone."

"It was," said Teddy.

"Such a crowd there was!" Octavia continued, conscious that she was talking the rapid drivel of a school-girl describing her first dance. "The balconies were as warm as the rooms. I—lost—something at that ball." The last sentence was uttered in a tone calculated to remove the barbs from miles of wire.

"So did I," confessed Teddy, in a lower voice.

"A glove," said Octavia, falling back as the enemy approached her ditches.

"Caste," said Teddy, halting his firing line without loss. "I hobnobbed half the evening with one of Hammersmith's miners, a fellow who kept his hands in his pockets, and talked like an archangel about reduction plants and drifts and levels and sluice-boxes."

"A pearl gray glove, nearly new," sighed Octavia, mournfully.

"A bang-up chap, that McArdle," maintained Teddy, approvingly. "A man who hated olives and elevators; a man who handled mountains as croquettes, and built tunnels in the air; a man who never uttered a word of silly nonsense in his life. Did you sign those lease-renewal applications yet, *madama*? They've got to be on file in the land office by the thirty-first."

Teddy turned his head lazily. Octavia's chair was vacant.

A certain centipede, crawling along the lines marked out by fate, expounded the situation. It was early one morning while Octavia and Mrs. MacIntyre were trimming the honey-suckle on the west gallery. Teddy had risen and departed hastily before daylight in response to word that a flock of ewes had been scattered from their bedding ground during the night by a thunder-storm.

The centipede, driven by destiny, showed himself on the floor of the gallery, and then, the screeches of the two women giving him his cue, he scuttled with all his yellow legs through the open door into the furthestmost west room, which was Teddy's. Arming themselves with domestic utensils selected with regard to their length, Octavia and Mrs. MacIntyre, with much clutching of skirts and skirmishing for the position of rear guard in the attacking force, followed.

Once inside, the centipede seemed to have disappeared, and his prospective murderers began a thorough but cautious search for their victim.

Even in the midst of such a dangerous and absorbing adventure Octavia was conscious of an awed curiosity on finding herself in Teddy's sanctum. In that room he sat alone, silently communing with those secret thoughts that he now shared with no one, dreamed there whatever dreams he now called on no one to interpret.

It was the room of a Spartan or a soldier. In one corner stood a wide, canvas-covered cot; in another a small bookcase; in another a grim stand of Winchesters and shotguns. An immense table, strewn with letters, papers and documents and surmounted by a set of pigeon-holes, occupied one side.

The centipede showed genius in concealing himself in such bare quarters. Mrs. MacIntyre was poking a broom-handle behind the bookcase. Octavia approached Teddy's cot. The room was just as the man-

ager had left it in his hurry. The Mexican maid had not yet given it her attention. There was his big pillow with the imprint of his head still in the centre. She thought the horrid beast might have climbed the cot and hidden itself to bite Teddy. Centipedes were thus cruel and vindictive toward managers.

She cautiously overturned the pillow, and then parted her lips to give the signal for reinforcements at sight of a long, slender, dark object lying there. But, repressing it in time, she caught up a glove, a pearl-gray glove, flattened—it might be conceived—by many, many months of nightly pressure beneath the pillow of the man who had forgotten the Hammersmiths' ball. Teddy must have left so hurriedly that morning that he had, for once, forgotten to transfer it to its resting place by day. Even managers, who are notoriously wily and cunning, are sometimes caught up with.

Octavia slid the gray glove into the bosom of her Summery morning-gown. It was hers. Men who put themselves within a strong barbed-wire fence, and remember Hammersmith balls only by the talk of miners about sluice-boxes, should not be allowed to possess such articles.

After all, what a paradise this prairie country was! How it blossomed like the rose when you found things that were thought to be lost! How delicious was that morning breeze coming in the windows, fresh and sweet with the breath of the yellow ratama blooms! Might one not stand, for a minute, with shining, far-gazing eyes, and dream that mistakes might be corrected?

Why was Mrs. MacIntyre poking about so absurdly with a broom?

"I've found it," said Mrs. MacIntyre, banging the floor. "Here it is."

"Did you lose something?" asked Octavia, with sweetly polite non-interest.

"The little devil!" said Mrs. MacIntyre, driven to violence. "Ye've no forgotten him alretty?"

Between them they slew the centipede. Thus was he rewarded for his agency toward the recovery of things lost at the Hammersmiths' ball.

It seems that Teddy, in due course, remembered the glove, and when he returned to the house at sunset made a secret but exhaustive search for it. Not until evening, upon the moonlit eastern gallery, did he find it. It was upon the hand that he had thought lost to him forever, and so he was moved to repeat certain nonsense that he had been commanded never, never to utter again. Teddy's fences were down.

This time there was no ambition to stand in the way, and the wooing was as natural and successful as should be between ardent shepherd and gentle shepherdess.

The prairies changed to a garden. The Rancho de las Sombras became the Ranch of Light.

A few days later Octavia received a letter from Mr. Bannister, in reply to one she had written to him asking some questions about her business. A portion of the letter ran as follows:

"I am at a loss to account for your references to the sheep ranch. Two months after your departure to take up your residence upon it, it was discovered that Colonel Beaupree's title was worthless. A deed came to light showing that he disposed of the property before his death. The matter was reported to your manager, Mr. Westlake, who at once repurchased the property. It is entirely beyond my powers of conjecture to imagine how you have remained in ignorance of this fact. I beg that you will at once confer with that gentleman, who will, at least, corroborate my statement."

Octavia sought Teddy, with battle in her eye.

"What are you working on this ranch for?" she asked once more.

"One hundred—" he began to repeat, but saw in her face that she knew. She held Mr. Bannister's letter in her hand. He knew that the game was up.

"It's my ranch," said Teddy, like a school-boy detected in evil. "It's a mighty poor manager that isn't able to absorb the boss's business if you give him time."

"Why were you working down here?" pursued Octavia, still struggling after the key to the riddle of Teddy.

"To tell the truth, 'Tave," said Teddy, with quiet candor, "it wasn't for the salary. That about kept me in cigars and sunburn lotions. I was sent South by my doctor. 'Twas that right lung that was going to the bad on account of over-exercise and strain at polo and gymnastics. I needed climate and ozone and rest and things of that sort."

In an instant Octavia was close against the vicinity of the affected organ. Mr. Bannister's letter fluttered to the floor.

"It's—it's well now, isn't it, Teddy?"

"Sound as a mesquite chunk. I deceived you in one thing. I paid fifty thousand for your ranch as soon as I found you had no title. I had

just about that much income accumulated at my banker's while I've been herding sheep down here, so it was almost like picking the thing up on a bargain-counter for a penny. There's another little surplus of unearned increment piling up there, 'Tave. I've been thinking of a wedding trip in a yacht with white ribbons tied to the mast, through the Mediterranean, and then up among the Hebrides and down Norway to the Zuyder Zee."

"And I was thinking," said Octavia, softly, "of a wedding gallop with my manager among the flocks of sheep and back to a wedding breakfast with Mrs. MacIntyre on the gallery, with, maybe, a sprig of orange blossom fastened to the red jar above the table."

Teddy laughed, and began to chant:

"Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
And doesn't know where to find 'em.
Let 'em alone, and they'll come home,
And——"

Octavia drew his head down, and whispered in his ear.

But that is one of the tales they brought behind them.



FINANCIAL

LONG time with vigor did he woo her,
And kindly smiles from her he prayed for;
Oft spoke of bonds of love unto her,
But love of bonds was what he stayed for.



VALUABLE EXPERIENCE

OLD TRAIN-ROBBER—You seem to take nat'rally to this business. What did you use ter do in the East?

NEW TRAIN-ROBBER—I druv a cab.



THE MAIDEN (*sadly*)—They say he was disappointed in love.

THE MAN—Well, that isn't so bad as to be disappointed in marriage.

THE QUEST OF AN ANCESTOR

SCENE: *A Public Library, in which a YOUNG PATRIOTIC LADY and the ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, also young, appear in conversation. AN ANCIENT PERSON and BOOKWORMS in the distance.*

LADY (*communicatively*)—I wish to join "The Daughters of the French and Indian War," and to be eligible I have to prove a certain ancestor.

LIBRARIAN (*politely*)—Better consult the genealogical index; you will find a list of books there pertaining to your ancestor's name.

LADY—The name is—(*stops, perplexed.*) How perfectly absurd of me! I had it not two minutes ago.

LIBRARIAN (*absently*)—What is your name? (*Suddenly confused.*)

LADY (*coloring*)—My name wasn't his.

LIBRARIAN—I'm afraid you'll have a pretty difficult search, then.

LADY (*seized with bright idea*)—Haven't you any books that go back?

LIBRARIAN (*concealing a smile*)—I regret to say that they all come down.

LADY—How silly! It would be ever so much easier the other way.

LIBRARIAN (*thoughtfully*)—Where did this ancestor come from?

LADY—I haven't the remotest idea. Maybe he didn't come over at all.

LIBRARIAN (*consistently*)—Perhaps he was an Indian.

LADY (*surprised*)—Do I look like an Indian?

LIBRARIAN (*admiringly*)—Your hair is black enough; the contour of your face is not unsuggestive of the North American aboriginal—but very delicate in mould; your eyes—(*he looks straight into them and hesitates; he compromises by saying:*) they are opalesque.

LADY (*practically*)—Are Indians' eyes opalesque?

LIBRARIAN (*confused*)—I'm sure I don't know. I suppose they are—Anyhow, your complexion is dark.

LADY (*a little coldly*)—I happen to be tanned. (*She here recollects progenitor's name, and exclaims:*) Oh, I have it; my ancestor's name was Smith!

LIBRARIAN (*a little sarcastically*)—The name would never have occurred to me. When that man at the index gets through I'll help you look up Smith, if you like.

LADY—You are very kind. Who is he? (*Refers to ANCIENT PERSON at the index, who sits with his back to them.*)

LIBRARIAN—He's a professional genealogist. (*Mysteriously*) He comes up here and plans out family-trees for people.

LADY—Is he expensive?

LIBRARIAN—Three dollars a day, or a lump sum for your entire record. He takes you back to King Alfred for fifty dollars.

LADY—You don't say! I'll sit down and wait. (*Takes chair. Ten minutes pass; ANCIENT PERSON has not moved; YOUNG LADY rises and goes over far enough to see his face; turns pale and hurries to LIBRARIAN; says emotionally:*) Oh, how perfectly horrible! I BELIEVE HE'S DEAD! (*YOUNG ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN greatly agitated; rushes frantically over to ANCIENT PERSON; excitement among BOOKWORMS. As LIBRARIAN lays his hand on ANCIENT PERSON's shoulder a loud sonorous snore is abruptly cut in half; visible stir among BOOKWORMS.*)

LIBRARIAN (*fervently*)—Thank heaven he didn't die—*here!* (*Ousts ANCIENT PERSON, who apologizes for having been thought dead; draws up two chairs and beckons to YOUNG PATRIOTIC LADY; general neck-stretching among BOOKWORMS.*)

ROY MELBOURNE CHALMERS.